The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Donald MacLeod:

CONTEMPORARY PREACHING

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VOL. XXII, NO. 4 APRIL, 1951

BY DONALD MACLEOD

'BUSINESS AS USUAL' IN

"BUSINESS as Usual" across the façade of a local shop may appear to some as a heroic gesture, especially when the sounds of busy workmen inside suggest all the inconvenience and litter of postwar alterations. Yet everyone commends the shopkeeper for his courageous intention to carry on and his caution against a slump in dividends.

What has this to do with contemporary preaching? Simply this: postwar preaching has hung up its "Business as Usual" sign, but public patronage, with the exception of some sporadic outbursts, has hardly been sustained. What is the reason for this difference between the net results of the shopkeeper and the midcentury preacher? The shopkeeper, while maintaining the same quality of stock, changes his emphases to meet the emergencies of the situation, whereas the postwar preacher has continued, with few exceptions, to present his message in a way that is frequently incongruous with or irrelevant to the life situation.

The Same Old Message?

At the close of the Second World War, I asked a ministerial friend of mine, "What are we to preach now that the war is ended?" "The same old message," was his reply. And in a sense he was right. But at the same time I sensed his peril, because I knew that he meant the same old message with *the same old emphases.* And from 1945 to 1950—five decisive and formative years—the American pulpit has proclaimed the "same old message," but much unnecessary disappointment has been registered through failure to single out and appropriate new emphases. This has been the rub. And the result has been described aptly by one preacher who said: "It is not a little because of this fact that churches are emptying and that few people regard institutional Christianity as a vital factor in securing world peace or domestic righteousness." Ours is an extraordinary age, and it demands extraordinary preaching with peculiar emphases to meet its needs. "Business as usual" in the contemporary pulpit, if continued, will be our undoing.

Few exercises are more instructive (and awakening!) than to read several volumes of a well known American religious periodical that features sermons by preachers of all faiths. It is in this way that one preacher has been able to see how the most common weaknesses in contemporary preaching stem from misplaced emphases, from failure to accentuate what is urgently relevant and essential.

Postwar Sermons

Here are some conclusions derived from reading a cross section of these postwar sermons:

1. The wider knowledge of human behavior which modern media (science, psychology, radio, etc.) have provided, has created among preachers an overanxiety to gear their sermons to the "here and now," and this undue emphasis has given a temporal complexion to the essence of the eternal verities they proclaim.

2. Many sermons begin by positing a weighty theological principle, but the subsequent treatment of it amounts merely to a happy selection of illustrations whose sole right to be included is simply that they are interesting. Architects of this type Dr. George Jeffrey in his Warrack Lectures of 1949 describes as "preachers whose method of sermon preparation seems to be the search for three anecdotes, setting them down like three islands in a homiletical sea, the rest of the sermon consisting in swimming breathlessly from one to the other in the lively hope of coming safely to land."

3. There is in many of these sermons an absence of the substructure of biblical history and experience. Ethical principles are considered within abstract, philosophical patterns and are remote from the reality and concreteness of St. Luke's declaration: "They told what things were done."

4. Many sermons persist in speaking about life from a balcony setting. They seem unaware that the preacher's proposition is "to" life, which presupposes not only a vital message but also—and this is so important—a character that incarnates its principles.

5. Emphasis is laid upon the happy fortune of those who choose certain virtues which, upon examination, are discovered to be shared by pagans, and no attempt is made to show what

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Princeton professor believes that new note of urgency is a major need in present-day preaching

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these become when the "plus" of Christianity is added or its revolutionary powers are exercised or inculcated.

So much for diagnosis. That is always easy. What about prescriptions for arresting and curing these ailments? No one has the temerity to claim to possess an adequate antidote or panacea, but some effort can be made to define new zones of emphasis whereby the old message may answer more effectively than ever the needs and character of the age.

The Preacher's Task

1. Contemporary preaching must aim to show people "where they are," expose their peril, and tell them what awaits them if and when they are shown the way out. Hitherto the emphasis has been placed upon speaking to people "where they are"; but this has been discovered to be almost futile because most people do not know where they are and would not believe the preacher if he told them. And further, some preachers strive so hard always to be where their people are that rarely can they provide a challenge and incentive to the congregation to aspire beyond the level that merely moral maxims and ethical proprieties demand.

Few illusions have infiltrated our generation more than a certain cult of realism. To be known as a realist is almost a prerequisite to social and political acceptance. But, in this sense, the term does not mean what Shakespeare intended when he wrote of the office of the true dramatist: "To hold the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." To the ordinary citizen, to be realistic means usually to compromise on principle, to make the end justify the means, and to retain complacency in making the best of a bad situation for which he stoutly denies any responsibility. And the majority of people are wholly unaware of their enslavement to the strange ethics of this cult. To these the contemporary preacher must speak, but his emphasis must be such that they will be exposed and their conscience sensitized to their need.

Swedish Survey

Last year a leading Swedish newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter,* made a study of a cross section of Swedish sermons and described them as "dull, indifferent and obscure." And the chief reason for this unfortunate condition of preaching, so the newspaper claimed, was that preachers are "so apprehensive of giving offense that they say nothing at all."

Hence the contemporary preacher must place his emphasis upon the placarding of moral absolutes until people see by clear contrast where they are and realize what they, by complacency and indifference, have become. And one need hardly add here that the divine claim and incisive edge of these moral absolutes acquire authority only within the context of "Thus saith the Lord." In short, unless emphasis is laid upon the prophetic note, contemporary preaching will have missed its opportunity and failed in its mission to this generation.

2. Contemporary preaching must assume a note of urgency that will arise not so much from the exigencies and pressures of the life situation as from the nature and essence of the message. This urgency, however, does not imply necessarily some cataclysmic doom, although such is never outside the realm of possibility. It is, moreover, very like what Peter and John meant when they said: "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). And by this new emphasis, we do not suggest that our attention and concern for human need be withdrawn, but that the good news be so appropriated into character that we are seized with an irresistible urgency to tell its wondrous story to everyone.

Meaning of New Emphasis

What will this new emphasis mean for preaching? Simply that this note of urgency will supply the missing quality in our worship of which preaching is the unifying principle. The day is past in which we can be content with a blasé performance in the prescribed hour of worship on Sunday morning and by which we hope by fiat to fashion a new order of things. The revival of interest in reformed worship is wholesome and long overdue, but its value will be lost if it develops into a cult whose gods are merely quiet music, atmosphere and relaxation. At the same time, we cannot condone the rise of another school of thought that is unwittingly forcing a professionalism and career psychosis upon the younger generation of preachers. To offset both these dangers we must restore preaching to its paramount place in worship. Only when it becomes the unifying factor in worship will it become also its evangelical principle. The proclamation of the good

news belongs at the very heart of true worship, and if the note of urgency is in the ascendancy, the whole quality of that worship will be changed and made more efficacious. Hence there is no place in contemporary preaching for emphasis upon philosophical jargon and behavior patterns; rather the emphasis must be upon the rare quality of spiritual urgency, the corollary of genuine religious experience. Appropriate here is a sentence from Dr. F. W. Norwood: "All hail to him who can look the whole world in the face, take his life in his hands, and say what he needs must."

3. Contemporary preaching must emphasize "being" as prerequisite to a realization of the highest ends of life. All too frequently the reverse has been stressed. Emphasis has been laid upon human endeavor toward ethical ends as the *sine qua non* of religion, and consequently no thought was given to that law so ingrained in the moral fabric of the universe that real virtues are by-products of a quality of "being." In a sense it is commendable to exhort people to courage or hope, for example, but do not the pagan and secularist so exhort also? The Christian approach, however, is to emphasize a quality of life that is undergirded by faith in the undefeatable promises of God which were vindicated in Christ and of which hope and courage, and all other worthy virtues, are by-products. "True worth is in being," wrote the poet. And in the realm of Christian living, this is emphatically true.

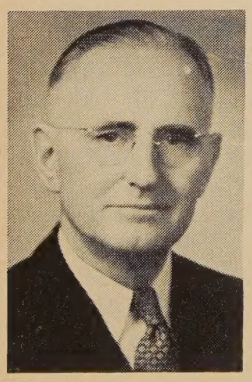
Jesus' Emphasis

This was, after all, the place where Jesus placed strongest emphasis. In the Sermon on the Mount, he was very far from urging his disciples to try to be meek or humble or pure in heart; nor did he suggest that the ends of the Kingdom would be determined by one's ability either to be calm or to relax. On the contrary, he announced, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (*Mark 1:15*). Upon this tremendous fact, the realization of the blessed life hinged. As Dr. John Dow put it in his book *This is Our Faith*: "Grace is always in the field ahead of every Christian endeavor." And our contemporary preaching must capture this note and make it arrestingly articulate. Such would mean a profound revolution in our way of life, in our aims and methods in Christian education, in family and community affairs. It is not new. It is written large across the preaching of the New Testament, where no "business as usual" concept has any place, because the urgent proclamation of the good news arrested men there and made them see that it was either "Now or Never" or "Now Forever."

Can Christianity Save Civilization?

By G. S. Nichols

GOD SAYS, "Let there be light!" But "men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil"; and so darkness covers the face of the earth. God says, "It is good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity." But we lift up our hands against our brothers in competition and strife. God says, "Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces." But we produce poverty and war. God says, "Let all things be done decently and in order." But we are too muddle-headed to mind his meaning, and so the confusion only becomes worse confounded. We are bewildered; we have lost our way; we are in the throes of a terrific upheaval the magnitude of which most of us have not even attempted to estimate. We face almost irreparable disaster, if not the total extinction of our species. The very foundations of our civilization seem to be giving way and the whole heavy structure is sagging on the side toward hell.



What can we do about it? Can the church encircle the world with strong arms of compassion and hold it steady in this hour of its staggering uncertainty and suffering? An old letter comes down to us from the second century, the "Epistle to Diognetus," in which the writer says of the Christians of his day, "They hold the world together." Can we hold our world together? Can Christianity save civilization? Certainly there are enough Christians in the world to save the world if only we were Christian enough. The hour calls for Christians who are Christian to the fingertips.

Forces of Disintegration

But let us look first at the forces of disintegration. What are the downward and backward pulls on life? What are the evils that are disrupting and dividing?

One of these certainly is racism. Someone has

G. S. NICHOLS is in his sixteenth year as pastor of Collegiate Methodist, Ames, Iowa. Of the 1,500 people who hear him on most Sundays, 1,000 are students at Iowa State College. His church was one of the twelve great churches studied by the Christian Century *in 1950. It was written up in the Nov. 29 issue of that magazine.*

said that people are thinking today not with their minds but with their blood. Instead of developing a "consciousness of kind," we have developed an exaggerated consciousness of race, and riots, pogroms and unspeakable cruelties against minorities have resulted. The late Dr. Ruth Benedict was an accepted anthropologist and a skillful writer. In her book *Race, Science and Politics* she declares that racism is dangerous nonsense—unscientific, political claptrap. We Christians have a Book that would rid the world of racism by exposing it to the melting light of God's love, but we haven't taken it seriously enough. We haven't been strong enough in our own convictions to convince the world that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men."

Paradoxes of Brotherhood

Business is sometimes more brotherly for business' sake than religion is for humanity's sake and God's sake. I have been in cities where a Negro could feel free to go into the white man's store and make his purchases across the white man's counter, but he could not feel free to go into the white man's church and worship God at the white man's altar. Because he was an oriental Mahatma Gandhi was once denied admission to a Christian church to hear his friend C. F. Andrews preach. But he stood patiently by the door outside and listened. Let the picture of that absurdity take possession of your mind a moment. It will explain in part the impotence of the church in this hour of the world's great need. Inside the church pious Christians with empty pomp and pageantry offering lip service to an unknown, Oriental Christ; outside, excluded from the service, the great-souled Gandhi. A church that excludes any class excludes Christ. A church that isn't big enough for all God's children isn't big enough for God.

Chauvinism Is Rampant

Another force that is tearing our world to pieces is chauvinism. A false, exaggerated, inflamed nationalism has set the world on fire. Men everywhere are exploiting patriotism and commanding the masses to bow down to the god of nationalism. Nor will they countenance a divided loyalty. They demand that we bring everything we possess and place it on this flaming altar, which altar is consuming the resources of the earth and the priceless treasures of our civilization. The patriotic impulse is a splendid thing when it is constructively and creatively directed, but it is a dangerous thing when directed by demagogues and professional patrioteers. The era of independent, anarchistic national sovereignties is gone forever. If we do not have sense enough and character enough to organize the world for peace and brotherhood, we shall perish in our stupidity and greed.

We almost destroyed the world in an effort to destroy Adolf Hitler, but Hitler was a natural product of the civilization that we have produced; he was a symptom, indicating to all who have eyes to see that our society is sick, sick unto death —sick of selfishness and sin, sick of materialism, greed and hypocrisy, sick of provincialism and chauvinism. We have dealt with the symptom; we must now deal with the disease.

The time is short, the task is imperative, our responsibility is inescapable. A third world war can be averted only by a gigantic effort on the part of the common people. Those in leadership are trying the same old techniques, the same old formulas that have always failed. We have a new organization, the United Nations, but we aren't united, and we refuse to surrender to it enough of our sovereign rights to make it work.

Back of the United Nations and unrelated to it, for the most part, our destinies are being determined. In this jungle land back of the United Nations, one may see the same old diplomacies in operation—power politics, imperialistic expansion; small nations being pushed around, dominated and exploited by the powerful; an armament race on an unprecedented scale, with instruments of destruction so deadly that the devil would hardly dare to use them to suppress an insurrection in hell. We are bluffing, blundering and thundering our way toward the final disaster.

U.N. Deserves Support

We must support, strengthen and improve the United Nations. With all its faults and weaknesses, it is the world's last hope for a cooperative, peaceful world. We must delegate to it adequate jurisdiction and authority. Anthony Eden, former British foreign secretary, has said:

> Every succeeding scientific discovery makes greater nonsense of old-time concepts of sovereignty. . . . I have been unable to see—and I am still unable to see—any final solution that will make the world safe from atomic power unless we all abate our present ideas of sovereignty. We have got somehow to take the sting out of nationalism. . . . In the light of discoveries about atomic energy I think that the San Francisco Charter should be reviewed, particularly with respect to the veto, which is an anachronism in the modern world.

We must decide now whether we want one world or no world. The time for tinkering and puttering is past. It is too late for us to stage a sit-down strike against God's march of time. We shall go staggering down the road of selfishness, greed and strife to the utter annihilation of human values; or we shall choose the other road of brotherhood to the Kingdom of God.

Other economic and cultural forces that are contributing to classism and strife could be mentioned, but let us simply say that any man who builds barriers to brotherhood is building against almighty God and is undermining the foundations of

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our civilization. Whoever builds walls separating God's children is bucking the universe.

> Tear down the walls! God made of one
> All men who live upon the earth;
> He is our Father, we his sons,
> Whatever be our human birth.

Let us ask ourselves now what we can do to hold this broken, shattered world together and build God's kingdom on the earth.

We Must Care

In the first place, we must care. We must be hurt with our brother's hurts: we must be hungry when he is hungry; we must suffer in his suffering. Dr. William E. Hocking, in his book *Living Religions and a World Faith,* says that religion is a passion for righteousness conceived as cosmic demand. If the ideal doesn't become a flaming passion in your soul, it isn't religion. It may be a philosophy or a system of ethics, but it isn't religion.

How much do we care? How deeply are we stirred? How much of the world's suffering have we taken on our own hearts? It has been estimated that a hundred million people in Europe and Asia are trying to exist on a starvation diet of fifteen hundred calories or less per day. Do you ever take that thought to bed with you? If we had the spirit of Christ, that thought would haunt us at our meals. Listen to the words of Fritz Kreisler, who is perhaps the world's greatest violinist:

> I was born with music in my system. I knew musical scores instinctively before I knew my ABC's. It was a gift of Providence. I did not acquire it. So I do not even deserve thanks for the music.
>
> Music is too sacred to be sold. And the outrageous prices the music celebrities charge today are truly a crime against society.
>
> I never look upon the money I earn as my own. It is public money. It is only a fund entrusted to my care for proper disbursement.
>
> I am constantly endeavoring to reduce my needs to the minimum. I feel morally guilty in ordering a costly meal, for it deprives someone else of a slice of bread—some child, perhaps, of a bottle of milk. My beloved wife feels exactly the same way about these things as I do. You know what I eat; you know what I wear. In all these years of my so-called success in music we have not built a home for ourselves. Between it and us stand all the homeless in the world!

I know nothing of Fritz Kreisler's economic theories. I don't know whether he has any. But I do know that his spirit must take possession of the Christian church before we can minister adequately to a broken, bleeding, suffering world.

We Must Share

In the second place, we must share. We must care enough to share. Sympathy itself is not enough. Tolstoy tells of a woman who sat in a theater and wept when scenes of suffering were presented. But at the same time her own coachman, ill paid and ill clothed, was almost freezing at the door, and her weeping didn't warm him at all.

I heard Muriel Lester speak recently. She is the famed founder of London's Kingsley Hall, a world traveler, on speaking terms with the leaders of many nations, a crusader for peace, a friend of the poor in all lands, one of the most radiant, consecrated Christians of the century. Miss Lester's father left her quite a fortune, but a provision in his will made it impossible for her to give it away. She refused to be bound by this provision. "It rightly belongs to the working people of East London, not to me," she said, "for it was the labor of the East Londoners that created this wealth a generation or so ago."

She went to court to have the will broken. When she failed there she appealed to Parliament. Finally by an act of the British Parliament her inheritance became the "Restitution Fund," providing that "whereas the annuitant is of opinion that she has no right to accept this income while her neighbors lack necessities, holding that God's law of providing bountifully for all is more wise and decent than the law of the land which secures to a few people more than they need while the many have to endure less than they need. The annuity should be handed back to the people in order to enrich and widen their common life."

There breathes through this act of Parliament the spirit of the Master. If we had more Muriel Lesters in the church we could build the Christian world of which we have dreaded and for which we have prayed for centuries.

We Must Pray

A few years ago I received a student into the membership of our church on confession of faith. He gave to the local and world service budget that year exactly sixty dollars. I knew he couldn't afford it because he was having a very hard time working his way through school. But before I had got around to talk to him I thought of the lads of the world who are constantly called upon to give, not sixty dollars per year, but their very lives to this vast debacle of destruction called war. What puny efforts we Christians are making to save the world in comparison with what is being done to destroy it! If we cannot match the disintegrating forces of destruction in devotion and consecration, we are done for. We must care enough to share.

Finally, we must lift the world up to God in prayer. We must keep alive the sense of fellowship with the Eternal. We must keep our hearts wide open to the Godward side and our faces toward the dawn. The only man whose optimism is justified in this hour is the man who is sure of God.

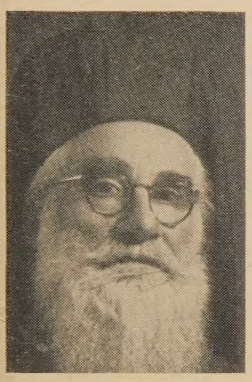
Our God has not been pushed from his throne by the forces of evil. He is an ongoing God who never quits. He will not let us down. His grace is sufficient. Let us call on him and cooperate with him. The task is too great for mere men; it is not too great for men of God. Let us be in truth what we profess to be, coworkers together with God in building the kind of world he wants for his children. A God-led, God-empowered Christianity can save our civilization. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world."

ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL is the spiritual leader of more than six million North and South Americans of Greek descent, one million of whom live in the United States. He is reputed to be one of the most learned clergymen in the Eastern Orthodox Church. He was formerly metropolitan of Corinth.

The Efficacy of Christian Virtue and Prayer in the World Today

By Archbishop Michael

WE live today in historic times of stress, in times when the high moral principles of Americanism and the eternal teachings themselves of the heavenly Father of us all are seriously challenged. The gigantic conflict between two absolutely opposed ideologies of economy, politics and culture has shaken the very root and fiber of our generation. And much to our despair we find that, while civilization now has at its disposal the most marvelous resources it has ever known—a fabulous treasury of material wealth, a superbly developed world of science, and in democracy a most desirable system of political life—it has failed to realize the true prosperity, the peace and spiritual comfort which it could enjoy. Man is dazed and all his thoughts are darkened by the futility of his every material effort to secure for himself and his fellow man a fruitful, tranquil life.



Mindful of the ultimate lack of success with which the materialistic concept of life must meet, all our Christian churches would agree, I am sure, that the salvation of mankind in these moments of utter crisis would lie in the largest part in the ageless Christian virtues which God, through the Holy Scriptures, has graciously revealed to us.

I

Faith is the first of these virtues that we need—faith the Light of the world; faith in the Almighty who tells us, "I am come a light into the world that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." Those who have experienced faith in God have made their way through life triumphantly. While they have not been spared the bitter tribulation and the stormy, evil temptations of life, they have met them gloriously and have prevailed; for they have known the strength of the hand of God. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Faith elevates us far above the bounds of human reason. Both these attributes, reason and faith, are gifts of God. But while the first is a common gift to all mankind, the second is a gift which is offered only to those who honestly thirst for the blessed guidance and inspiration that the Ancient of Days alone can give.

II

And walking hand in hand with faith is hope. Where there is faith, there is also hope. Hope is the product of faith. Hope is the conviction that all those things which we believe, exist and are certain. Hope is the proof of faith. The farmer sows his seed to reap a harvest. And he manifests his faith in the firm hope that he will reap the harvest. His hope is that feeling which intervenes between the time of sowing and the time of harvest, though the harvest be not in sight. The traveler believes that he will reach his destination, and the passport he carries in his wallet represents the hope of the fulfillment of his faith, though the destination be not in sight.

Just as we do not see the object of our faith and yet believe in it, so also, while we do not see the object of our hope, we hope in it. Moreover, the objects of our faith and of our hope are one and the same; that is, almighty God and all the promises which he has given us through his incarnate Son and Word. Hope is the anchor of faith. It is the anchor made fast in the objects of our faith. Hope, as St. Paul says, is "the anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast."

We commonly acknowledge, and very rightly so, that the faith of the Christian man is truly displayed in times of crisis. And if in such times the Christian should succumb to despair, this is an indication that his faith was self-deceit. Faith, we have said, is shown through hope. Our salvation in any crisis depends upon the strength of our hope, and consequently we may say that hope in times of danger and of need is the evidence of our faith.

III

But the salvation of the world, besides lying in the Christian virtues of faith and hope, lies as well in the cardinal virtue of Christian love. Says St. Paul in his First Epistle to Corinthians: "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." Or in the original Greek:

"Nuni de menei pistis, elpis, agapa, ta tria taute, meizon de touton he agape."

By love, or agape, the zealous apostle means the love which we are bound to nourish for God and for our fellow man. For it is through love and only through love that we are able to prove that we are all children of our one God and brothers of our fellow men. *"En touto gnosesthe hoti emoi mathetai este."*

That God loves us there can be no question, for not only did he create the very world in which we live, but "he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have life everlasting." Therefore, our love for God must be analogous. It must be wholehearted, spontaneous and complete. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thy heart, and all thy strength and mind."

How shall we show in practice our complete love of God? First, by worshiping and honoring him abundantly and without reservation in the house of the Lord which is the church. Not that the Lord has need of these things, but that by them we may show that we love him. And second, by worshiping and honoring him within ourselves, each of us being a living temple of the Holy Ghost which is in us and which we have of God. And as the principal part of any temple is the altar, so in the living temple which we are, the principal part is the altar of the heart.

The heart must be clean and holy, for it sanctifies the entire temple. It sanctifies man and makes him clean with the purity of sentiment, with the nobility and loftiness of the desires of which it is capable. These things does it accomplish by absolute dedication to God, which is the most magnificent, most logical and most beautiful sacrifice to the Almighty. Truly is it written, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Yet we cannot have faith and hope and love without personal and intimate communion with the Lord our God. We cannot attain these virtues without the help of prayer. For our faith is bolstered and our hope is more deeply intrenched and our love lives through the channel to God which only prayer can open. Our prayer serves to join our human frailty to Divine Omnipotence. Prayer unites our barren spirit with the indescribable wealth of spirit that is Christ, in whom St. Paul found "the treasure of wisdom and knowledge." Prayer is the link between sinful man and almighty God; and as breath is vital to our physical existence, so is prayer to our spiritual well-being.

Perhaps an analogy drawn from the tender relationship between a father and his son in everyday life will further illustrate these thoughts. A young child will turn instinctively to its father when it would seek comfort or protection and advice in a moment of need. But that very child will hasten to its father when it would share with him a moment of happiness. And so we Christians must share not only our sorrow but also our joy with our Father who is in heaven.

IV

That is the true meaning of prayer. It is not supplication alone; it is even more an expression of love. It is not only our retreat from danger; it is also the refreshing breath of air that vivifies our being and nourishes our soul with the faith and hope and love that it has found in God.

And so, dear friends, while in this great land of ours the enormous material wealth of our nation gives us confidence for the future, we are certain to reinforce this confidence when we fully realize the efficacy of Christian virtue, the efficacy of prayer, the efficacy of full communion with the Lord our God, which in the final analysis may mean for the free peoples of the world the difference between humble defeat and glorious victory.

We Americans take pride and comfort in the knowledge that our nation is the bulwark of democracy and the arsenal of freedom throughout the world. But we take greater pride and greater comfort in the realization that ours is a nation of God and that its fortunes are entrusted to the steady hands of men of God.

Titles and Texts

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

Lyle Osborne Bristol, Baptist Church of the Redeemer, Brooklyn, N. Y. "Do You Want to Win?" I John 5:4—*and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

Wesley V. Hite, First Methodist, Paris, Texas. "Cited for Distinguished Service." Matt. 5, 13-14—*Ye are the salt of the earth—ye are the light of the world.*

Harry T. Bridwell, Central Church of Christ (Disciples) Buffalo, N. Y. "The Christ of the Courageous Word." Luke 13:22—*And he said go ye and tell that fox. . . .*

Harold Z. Bomberger, Church of the Brethren, Westminster, Md. "All This and Heaven Too!" Luke 18:29-30 (Moffatt)—*He said to them, "I tell you truly, no one has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the Realm of God, who does not receive ever so much more in this present world, and in the world to come life eternal!"*

E. Bruce Jacobs, Wilson Ave. Evangelical and Reformed, Columbus, O. "Each Other's Welfare." Exodus 18:7—*And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare: and they came into the tent.*

By Murray L. Wagner

Concerning Small Potatoes

You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! Matthew 23:24.

THE FARMS surrounding my boyhood home produced many potatoes. Great fields were a part of the rural scene and potatoes were considered the chief "money crop." They required more labor than any other crop and at harvest-time there was a ready demand for men, women and children in the fields.

Many mornings found us in the fields between 5:30 and 6 o'clock with the world's champion back-breaking job at hand. Down the maddening hours we followed our assigned rows, the August sun beating mercilessly upon our weary backs. Filling our baskets and emptying them in the rows of sacks standing in lines across the fields was a job for the stoutest. The hours dragged along until noon and then we made our way to dinner and a bit of rest; then back to the job until darkness settled down. Usually the heavy bags would be loaded on the slowly moving wagons before the supper hour. Then to supper, a bath in a bucket and to bed.

Working under the broiling sun for fifty cents to a dollar a day was a difficult but an endurable task. The worst feature of it all was that old man who walked along behind us with a cane, poking in the dead weeds and into the sides of the furrow. Stirring out some obscure little potato he would shout, "Look at this one you missed! You'll have to be more careful. Here's one of marketable size." But he never seemed to look up and out across the field to see the row upon row of overflowing sacks of potatoes we had *not* missed. All he could seem to think about was the small potatoes.

Some wise farmers simply turned their hogs into the potato field to do the gleaning. Nature had provided them with proper equipment for the job, so why not capitalize on it? If a hog can do it why bother a man?

Small potatoes betrayed Jesus and the small-potato diggers crucified him. The people who would not lift up their eyes to behold the harvest were making it their business to search out the small spuds he had deliberately ignored among the dead weeds and vines of the past.

I

Every man has within him something of the small-potato complex. There is an abundance of prejudice in each of us which drives us to look for the small potatoes in the other fellow's row. We tend so often to ignore the accomplished good and call attention to the weaknesses or failures of those whom we inwardly envy. The accusers of Jesus lived in so small a cabbage patch that they could never comprehend the expanse of his Kingdom. Their contemptuous expressions—"That carpenter!" "Can any good come out of Nazareth?"—marked them immediately as men of closed minds who would make so much dust while digging out small potatoes on other people's rows that the Lord of the Harvest should not see their own omissions.

Probably the most insidious expression of this personal littleness is seen in some religious attitudes. They accused Jesus of failing to preach the "old-time religion." They were perfect in that judgment. Of course he did not preach on old, worn-out religion. He came to declare a new way. The old had failed. Had the old religion been sufficient he would never have come as Lord. The old song has it one hundred per cent wrong. The "old-time religion" was *not* "good for Paul and Silas," else why should they rot away in a prison for declaring the new? Let no minister today be found guilty of preaching an old, comfortable, worn-out religion. Small potatoes will not do for this hungry world.

"You see," they say before the Judge, "he said he would tear down our old church and build a new one." So they set about to rid themselves of him. If they could discredit him religiously, their problems would end. Small potatoes!

This prejudice within us leads to fault-finding. This is a devilish ruse which would draw attention from our own failures through pointing to the small potatoes in another's row. "Sure," one says, "I take a drink now and then, but that's not half as bad as that fellow over there . . ." Or, "I know I talk a lot more than I should but there's Brother Jones, he took a glass of beer at the firemen's picnic last week. He should be thrown out of the church."

April 29 is Rural Life Sunday. The Pulpit is featuring three appropriate sermons for the occasion: the one on this page by MURRAY L. WAGNER, Oscar Engebretson's sermon on page 11 and a sermon summary by Alfred W. Swan on page 20. Mr. Wagner is pastor of the Church of the Brethren in Troy, Ohio. He contributed to the volume reviewed in "Preachers in Print" on page 29.

You remember the process in Jerusalem. "They took counsel," says the Gospel recorder, "how they might ensnare him in his words." So—they set a snare, a carefully concealed trap which would spring when his guard was relaxed. They would ignore his words of truth and wisdom, his deeds of love and mercy; but by complete diligence they would sooner or later come upon some small potato. They would close their eyes against Blind Bartimeus and turn their backs upon Mary and her seven devils. The woman with the issue of blood and the dead child of the centurion and even the multitudes of hungry—these would be none of their concern. These keyhole peepers had small potatoes to dig.

A third aspect of this problem is that digging small potatoes gives a false sense of self-importance. Who were these self-appointed guardians of the religious welfare? They questioned the authority of the Lord's Anointed but they themselves were scarcely known by name to the Gospel biographers. At the trial they indicated that they had kept some account of the words spoken and deeds done, and where truth would not serve they used lies. They used a pious hocus-pocus whereby small potatoes grew large and filled the eyes of witnesses and authorities alike.

They said, "Let his blood be upon us and upon our children!" Their kind is always willing to have the children suffer the wretchedness imposed by small-potato minds. They forgot the children on his knee; the mothers whose wearisome labors were lightened because he had dropped by; the farmers whose tired shoulders were a bit straighter because he had stopped to talk about the Kingdom and the hand on the plow. Small-potato diggers can close portions of the mind against memory.

Now self-esteem is good in its place. A man who lacks it is a base creature. But Paul is right, as usual, when he suggests, "Let no man think more highly of himself than he ought to think." No man is better in his own eyes nor in the sight of his neighbor if he spends his time finding the faults of well intentioned men.

II

Christians must be alert always in their daily task. Jesus spoke of people who very carefully strain the gnats from their cup but with amazing aplomb will swallow a camel—thick eyelids, heavy flabby lips, the long ugly neck; then down go the humps, the thickly padded feet, and finally the filthy tail disappears without a blink. These were the small-potato specialists of our Lord's day.

Always a man cheats himself, his generation and his God when he busies himself with small and unworthy tasks. We miss too much of life, and far too many golden opportunities fade before our eyes. It is the old story that "while thy servant was busy here and there the man got away." So we forget our stewardship and responsibilities. When we have small-potato aspirations we forget that we are made in the image of God.

When we *do* find small errors—or large ones, for that matter—of what value is the effort? The mountain labors and brings forth a mouse. Christians have a better way. The old-time religion is not enough. We need a larger and competent faith—rich, vibrant, broad and satisfying. In Jesus we do not find gnats and small potatoes. He was alert to discover and commend the efforts of everyone for their innate goodness. The Syrophoenician woman, the Samaritan traveler, the child with his lunch, the thief on the cross—who can forget them?

Our battle is largely with ourselves.

> The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

Let us mind our rows, attend to our own business, and frankly admit that each of us has enough to do and that each of us will miss a few small potatoes—and some very large ones too! All of us have missed enough to bring down upon our heads the wrath of the Lord of the Harvest; "all of us have gone astray." Therefore let us remember the burdens under which all of us labor. To do our own work well, to commend our fellow workers whose backs are tired also and whose burdens are heavy, and then at the end of the day to leave the fields together in song—what more could be desired?

III

There is ample reward for the laborer. Only small minds could believe that falsehood and half-truths could permanently crucify truth, and that little potatoes (even with the governmental stamp and seal!) can be rolled effectively against the door of the tomb. History and experience should reveal to us that there is always an Eastertide and that the ultimate victory of life over death is not in a springtime garden of lilies and angels but when the soul of a man rises in glorious resurrection above the trifles of daily life.

Surely there will always be small potatoes in every man's labor, but these are not the important issues. The navy has it right; they have a grade of officer known as "petty officer" whose business is with the small details about which the superiors do not wish to be bothered. Perhaps it were well for every church to have a petty officer whose job would be to dig small potatoes, and then let the rest of the congregation spend its time on the essentials of the Lord's harvest. And let no man presume to trespass in the petty officer's bailiwick!

Few of us would intentionally number ourselves among those who stood shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Yet many of us have permitted ourselves the fiendish luxury of digging small potatoes—some of which have an uncomfortable likeness to those hurled on that Good Friday long ago. After all, we do remember that He said, "Inasmuch as you do it unto one of these least you do it unto me." Well, the same methods are used to crucify him afresh, and no Christian should be caught off guard at this point.

It would be a great day for any and all of us if

we were to resolve that for twenty-four hours we would go about our personal affairs prayerfully and carefully, and that every time we looked at a neighbor we'd have a kind thought concerning him; that we'd thank him for his efforts and encourage him in material and spiritual prosperity; that we'd be grateful for his talents and for his use of them in the community; and that before we dug any of his small potatoes we'd say a prayer for him—and look more carefully in our own row! Wouldn't that be a wonderful victory for the church and for us? And wouldn't it go a long way to make the world a bit more decent?

Well, such a goal is possible; it is also an essential if ever we are sincere in our prayer, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done." The fulfillment of our prayer depends pretty much on whether or not we are willing to get out of the small-potato business and become Christians. Let's stop strewing palm branches and shouting, "Hosanna in the highest!" until we have something more convincing to offer. But let us all hasten to recognize that the Kingdom's coming depends on us.

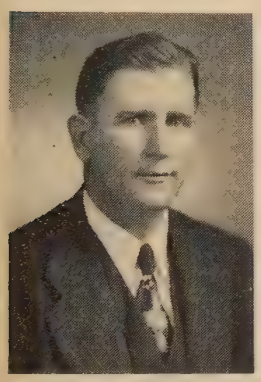
Gnats and camels and small potatoes on the one hand; on the other the eternal wealth of God. What will it be for you—today?

He Raiseth Dead Ones Still

By Oscar E. Engebretson

Luke 7:11-17.

NAIN means "beautiful," and Nain was a beautiful town in lovely surroundings. On that day however few thought of its beauty. Shortly before, word had spread through Nain that the only son of a widow of the village had died. Now the hour of burial had come, and Nain sorrowed as only those who live in small villages and rural communities can sorrow for one another, where the loss that comes to one home is a loss to all the homes.



There is nothing new about death and burial, nor was it new for those in Nain. We follow one another as in an endless train to the grave. The whole earth is a cemetery; the very dust we trample on, the very earth that yields our food, is mingled with the dust of those who have died. The poet who wrote, "We are on the way to Somewhere," might well have closed his verse with the acknowledgment that our common destination is the grave.

Common Guest

But even if it be true that death is such a common guest, it is still true that its coming is ever new and hard when it comes close to us. We read of it in every daily paper, and yet we stand aghast at its power when it strikes close to us. Even for the Christian with a sure hope in the resurrection, it is still true that it is a hard hour when we walk to the grave to lay a dear one in the last resting place. It is well that in so many places so many share the sorrow with the nearest and dearest and accompany them. It is hard to go alone to bury your dead. It is true that only God can give comfort in the face of death, but what does it not mean in that hour to have the real love of others!

Nain was in real sorrow today, for today the one they followed was a youth. It is said that the young *may* die, but the old *must*. Death spares no age. The fact that it was a beloved youth could not stay death's coming; and that it was one who was much needed by a lonely mother also failed to stay death's coming.

The sadness and sorrow did not have their beginning when the procession to the grave formed. There had been the anxiety of the fatal illness, the shock of the death. It was a cried-out mother who came with the villagers. It was a dark day in Nain.

Life Triumphs over Death

And then Jesus came, with his company. It was a strange meeting, this procession of death with a coffin at its head, and this procession of life with Jesus at its head. We are told they met in the gate. God planned it so, that they should meet in a narrow place where they might not pass each other. Now life confronts death and one must yield.

The glad message of the text today is that in the gate of Nain, life triumphed over death. The youth held in the grip of death was freed to live again. The sorrow of the mother and her band was turned into joy and rejoicing. We see them now as the procession of death turns about and becomes a part of the procession of life as Jesus leads them back into the the old yet now new surroundings.

That is still our comfort, that wherever death comes, another also offers to come, not only to share our sorrows but to change our hard and bitter hours into blessed experiences. How many

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are there not who from day to day will tell us that when death entered their immediate family circle, Jesus also came to be with them. It was still sorrow, but they found that it was never a bitter day nor a bad memory. The presence of Jesus had changed it all, so that it became a sweet sorrow, and the memory of the day in the presence of Jesus has been a benediction in the days that followed.

Thank God it is true that Jesus has the power to change both us and the circumstances which surround us. What a wonderful truth it is that with Jesus every life can enter the land of Beginning Again. Who can measure the peace that comes to every soul when it knows that through the grace freely given us by Christ Jesus, every day can be a new beginning?

This story of the raising of the dead in Nain is a story that is re-enacted daily in the world, even in our time. For it is true that he raiseth dead ones still.

There are so many places like Nain. There are so many places where the joy and beauty of life has been clouded over and seemingly has died. There are so many places where sin has cast its shadow over life.

Sorrow Comes with Sin

It may be an individual, a family or even a whole community that shares the sorrow that ever comes with sin. For it is not only God who punishes sin; sin carries within itself the seeds of ruin, pain and punishment. "The wages of sin is death," and "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," are words that still are in force.

It is not always youth that succumbs to spiritual death. Like temporal death, spiritual death knows no limit of age or station. But it is sad that often it is youth, youth with so much to give in a life of Christian service, which sickens and dies spiritually too. Who has not seen or remembered some youth, a boy or girl, from whom the parents and the entire community expected so much in the work of the Lord? Who has not remembered that for some reason that young life seemed to sicken and die in a spiritual sense? The interest for the things of God decreased, attendance in the house of God fell off, and after a time word came that this one was no longer to be reckoned among the living in the household of God. Who can measure the grief in the hearts of parent, pastor and friends when this takes place? How gladly the good parent would follow this one to a godly grave in preference to this that has come to pass!

And then Jesus comes . . . and the wonderful story is enacted again. It may differ in detail, but the story is the same, the ending is the same. Again and again we see the wonderful miracle take place. Who could ever forget the story of Monica and Augustine? What hopes and joy this good and godly mother had in her gifted and healthy son! Who can measure her grief as she witnessed that spiritual life which she had nurtured within him, die away as he turned to evil companions and open sin? We are told that in her agony over him, she almost wept herself blind. It is recorded that her pastor comforted her by saying that a son of so many tears and prayers could never be lost. But he was dying and then dead in trespasses and sins, borne along by the terrible coworkers of Satan.

When Jesus Comes

Then Jesus came. Through the preaching of the word, and through the chance chanting of a child, Jesus came to him, and he too rose from the depths of spiritual death to take his place in the great procession of life.

You have seen it, as Jesus has met someone like that. They have perhaps been avoiding him for a long time, but now he meets them in a place which he has arranged. It is a narrow place—for there are such places in life, where life narrows down until just one thing matters. It is easy to avoid reality at times. But when God lets one of the crises of life come upon one, it is so easy to see that only one thing matters—the relation of the soul to God.

It was easy to go along until sickness came. Now facing an operation it was strange how things changed again. The old half-forgotten truths mattered again. The early prayers of childhood, put away as childish things, were good to say again as one waited for the ether. Life was laid in a narrow way now; there was just a narrow door ahead, and an operating table, where life might wait or death. It would have been good to be able to believe now as in childhood that Jesus was near. And then he was near. Mother, the hospital pastor or the Christian doctor made you sure again. And it did not matter so much any more how things went in the operating room, for now the really important thing had come to pass. There was life in the soul.

Spiritual Rebirth

There was the older son. When he was younger he had gone to church too. He too had prayed and trusted in the Savior of whom his parents had so often spoken. That was long ago now, and life had been busy and he had much to think of besides these things. He would have resented it if someone had told him that his soul was parched and dry and dead. It mattered so little at any rate. But it was strange tonight. It was just yesterday that he and this neighbor had worked together in his field; tonight he offered to sit by the neighbor's bed, for the doctor said that the sudden heart attack had given him but hours to live. It was strange how narrow life became sitting here. It seemed that it was but two things now, life and death . . . and death was claiming his friend. It was strange too how unimportant the things of yesterday became all at once. The good golden grain that was so important yesterday seemed so unimportant today. Was it possible that his values were all wrong? And there was Jesus, coming out of the half-forgotten words that he had memorized in childhood —in the hymns, the prayers and the Scripture verses. It had happened again. Others did not know how, they only knew that one who had long been walking in the company of the dead had set his face to follow the Prince of Life.

There was power in the word which Jesus spoke:

"Young man, I say unto thee, arise." That voice which reached him, and which reached into the tomb of Lazarus, and which on the last day shall be heard by all those who sleep, can be heard today. Today he speaks through his word, the Word which is his voice. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." That word has the same power in raising the spiritually dead as it had when Jesus himself was present in the days gone by.

Power to Save

We are also profoundly grateful to know that even when men think it is too late, it still is possible for Jesus to act. We remember that at the time of the death of Lazarus some asked each other saying: "Could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" They felt that a cure had been possible, but that now it was too late. Jesus showed that his power is greater than our little faith dares to think. It is very possible that there were those also in Nain who felt that if Jesus had only come at an earlier hour, he might in this instance also have been of assistance. But now was it not too late? In answer Jesus reveals the power that is able to save to the uttermost, long after what man has thought possible.

How often we reason amiss in the same manner. We feel that it is reasonable and logical that we may win for the Kingdom those who, even though they live apart from Christ, live upright and moral lives. But we feel that it is of little use to seek those who by their very lives show that they have sunk into the sleep of spiritual death. Who does not remember how God has had to show us how little we understand his power and love as it seeks the lost even in this age? Many a pastor will remember after a day of calling in various homes to interest them in the Kingdom of God, that he has felt that certain families of high moral standing and culture seemed to promise some results for his concern—only to see in the following days that the ones who rejoiced the heart of Christ as well as the pastor were those whom he would so easily have written off as too dead to be quickened. What a wonderful evangelistic and missionary program the church of Christ here in our own land could have if we learned to go out in full confidence in the ability of Christ to raise the fallen by the power of his word even in our day.

'He Gave Him Back'

"And he gave him back to his mother." Thus the text closes the wonderful story of the widow's son of Nain. He gave him back—back from what? In this instance the strong bonds of death, which with irresistible force had taken him from her; from the narrow casket which confined him. Now he was given back that he might be free to walk in the path which the Giver of life had laid out for him.

He still gives them back. First of all he gives them back again to themselves. For he who has fallen into spiritual death has first of all surrendered his freedom and liberty to the power of sin and Satan. With what powerful cords are not the servants of sin bound! The miser, the drunkard, the impure—what are they but those who have been taken captive in the snares of Satan? Then Jesus comes, and not only awakens them to their true condition but in the cleansing grace that flows from him there is also the power to cut the cords that bind them, that they may walk again as God's freemen.

He gives them back to their own, their loved ones. What joy on earth is there that surpasses the pure joy of the home which has seen the prodigal restored to true life in Christ? Have you seen the father and mother who in a day have forgotten the tears and cares of months and years as they received again their own from the Giver of life? Have you seen the wife with tears of joy welcome again the reborn husband? Perhaps it was the son or daughter who so long prayed that the light and peace of soul they had found might also become the possession of a parent. If you have seen them when father or mother also rose from death into the new life in Christ, then you must know what it means that he gives them back again.

He gives them back to his church. And the church, like its Lord when he carried home the sheep that was lost, finds its heart moved to thanksgiving and praise as one by one the lost of the fold are still returned to life and salvation.

What a privilege we have to walk in the band of life with our Lord and Savior. He asks us to prepare the way before him that he may enter more and more hearts, more and more homes and more and more lands, that spiritual death may give way to the life which he possesses and which he came to impart to all who will receive it at his hand.

Litany

By Margery Ryerson

FROM all forms of race prejudice,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From meddling in the affairs of other nations more than we would want them to meddle in ours,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From flaunting our riches in the face of a poverty-stricken world,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From taking advantage of our strength to have our own way in the council of nations,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From ever strengthening the bad government of any foreign nation for the advantage it will give to us,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From denying to any people, even on some tiny island, those things which we ourselves value,
Good Lord, deliver us.

And teach us to know that all peoples of the world are proud and have something to give, that they will act their best and we can work together when we treat them as equals and friends.
Amen.

A. J. MUSTE is executive secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. During World War I he resigned his pastorate of Central Congregational, Newtonville, Mass., rather than abandon or keep silent about his religious pacifist convictions. The Pulpit has chosen this sermon as representative of pacifist preaching in the present emergency.

Overcoming Fear

By A. J. Muste

In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid; ye believe in God. John 16:33; 14:1.

THE nations today live in fear. Millions of words are written, thousands of therapists make a living, because individuals seek deliverance from fear. But Jesus knew no fear, and told others not to be afraid. This is not because he or they when these words were spoken, were in the usual sense secure. On the contrary, he was physically in a state of utter insecurity. It was the last night of his life. He knew that shortly he was to be betrayed by one of his disciples. Another, the one perhaps closest to him in spirit, would deny that he had even known him. Thus his life's work was apparently to be undone. He was to be arrested, accused of trying to turn the world upside down, crucified. He was to feel that even God had forsaken him.

This makes what he had to say about fear all the more significant. No one questions that he is one of earth's great conquerors. It is clearly of special importance for our own generation that he displayed fearlessness in the midst of utter insecurity, for if our generation is to find surcease from anxiety it must be in spite of the fact that existence is certain to be precarious. Only one who can show us how to be free from fear in the midst of mortal peril can help us.

Jesus' greatest strength was that there was nothing he wanted of the world, nothing of which it could deprive him, that he was not entirely willing to let go if fidelity to the will of God required it. Life itself he would not hold on to if to do so was to be unfaithful to principle. He had overcome the world because it could no longer hurt him, no longer deprive him of what he wanted.

'Men Are Attached'

The dictators and the stirrers up of hatred and hysteria all work from the knowledge that men are "attached"—attached to money, ease, a job, pleasure; to other people, to fame, to a reputation for being a solid citizen. They can be hurt if these things are taken from them. Therefore they can be terrorized, made to conform, sign loyalty oaths, goosestep, and stand by silent when freedom is stoned to death.

Our age as a whole is much attached to material things; we have more of them than any past age. Therefore our age is vulnerable, and therefore the dictators have the opportunity to take over everywhere. The only people over whom the dictators will not prevail are those who are without fear because the only thing they fear is to fail to do the will of God.

Wilhelm Mensching, the Lutheran pastor and Fellowship of Reconciliation leader in Germany who went through the years of the nazi regime and through the war without saying "Heil Hitler," told me in answer to my question as to how such nonconformists survived in a totalitarian state: "Except insofar as it was simply of God's grace, it was because the man who made it clear to the nazis from the start that they could kill him if they wanted to—Christians knew how to die—but they could not bend him, that he simply would not compromise conscience, had a chance to survive with honor. The least indication that you could be bought or terrorized because of something or someone you were attached to, was fatal."

Exactly the same thing is said by the American mission that went to Germany after the war to determine how far German scientists had gone toward atomic bomb production, about the few scientists who had insisted on scientific integrity and would not compromise it for the nazis. (See pages 185-86 in Samuel A. Goudsmit's *Alsos*, published by Henry Schuman, Inc., New York, 1947.)

Security and Fearlessness

Note then that you will always be haunted by fear so long as there are things you want more than character. An America that has half the wealth of the world in its hands and is seeking to hang on to it is haunted by fear. And it will continue to be haunted until, for example, it becomes as efficient in giving away its surplus food to famine-ridden Chinese as in selling refrigerators to American housewives.

That incident on the last night of Jesus' life also suggests the true relation between security and fearlessness. People think they must have security first, must create an outward situation in which there is nothing to be afraid of, and then, of course, they will not be afraid. That seems eminently sensible, and in a way it is. Human beings do have to have a certain minimum of food, clothing, shelter, in order to exist.

But it is easy to become obsessed with the idea of security and to give it a priority that in real life it does not have. Reflect that this fear-ridden generation of ours is materially much better off than any of its forerunners. There could hardly be a more complete and terrible illustration of what happens to men who think security comes first and who regard the counsel, "Be not anxious for your life . . . seek first the Kingdom," as amusing.

In some situations we are well enough aware of the fact that security is the result of risk, that "out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety." The businessman who devotes himself to hanging on to the dollars he has will never make any money. The child who hangs on to his mother's apron strings for security will live in a torment of fear and may be driven to seek "safety" in insanity.

Seeking Safety

The basic question never is how much wealth, armor or protection an individual or nation can hold on to. There will never be enough to banish fear. Something invariably happens to knock the props out from under such a seemingly secure edifice if the spirit seeks to shelter itself there.

In his brilliant article "The Strategy of World War III," which appeared in the summer of 1950 issue of *American Perspective*, a scientist, Dr. Alexander Mebane, has demonstrated how the assigning of priority to security by a nation such as ours drives it to "seek safety" in insanity. He calls the armaments race a "paranoia race" and points out that the paranoia from which the United States as well as Russia suffers today "implies the inevitability of atomic war." But to this difficulty the paranoiac supplies his own crazy "solution":

> In the paranoid system the duty of fighting the enemy is an absolute one: to weigh the consequences would be dishonorable. . . . Therefore, if fighting the enemy means atomic war; if it means destruction of most of the cities of the world; if it means the transformation of thousands of square miles into radioactive deserts; if it means man-made plagues; if it means the extinction of democratic governments everywhere; if it means permanent radioactive pollution of the very oceans and of the air itself; *if it means the death of all living things*—all of these are *lesser evils!* In the paranoid state what Russia might do to us if we failed to threaten her militarily must be considered to be *worse than the annihilation of the whole world.*

Need more be said to drive home the lesson? It is not security with which we start and fearlessness with which we then end up. Fearlessness is what we must begin with. Paradoxically, we may then achieve outward security. However, if we *are* still outwardly insecure, we are thus—and only thus—able to deal creatively with the situation. The state of blessedness is not the state of security in the midst of fear, but of fearlessness in the midst of insecurity.

Freedom from Fear

Finally, Jesus was free from fear because he had made himself defenseless, had "put up his sword." He who arms himself, arms his enemy. If you must "defend" yourself against him, he concludes he must "defend" himself against you.

But the fact is that Jesus was crucified, that the innocent do suffer. "Defenselessness" is not a guarantee against injury. If we think that we have thus caught Jesus in inconsistency or foolishness, however, we are mistaken. He said explicitly: "He that would save his life must lose it. Except the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it cannot bear fruit" (John 12:24).

Man seeks to defend, to advance and save his life, but he cannot do it in any adequate sense. He lives in a universe that will not stay put. Much more serious, he must die. Many psychologists and philosophers hold that it is this precariousness, this ultimate insecurity of man's life that is at the root of the anxiety that besets him. He wants to put death away, and he cannot.

The stoic schools himself to be indifferent to death and thus achieves a kind of mastery over it. But Jesus went beyond this. He adopted a positive attitude, an attitude of acceptance, even of joy, toward the ultimate threat of death. He chose the *manner* of his death, *chose* to die, for principle, for God. Thus he even, in a measure, determined the time of his death. But even this is not the full story of how Jesus overcame death, and by the same token fear. Men in the effort to save life destroy and kill other men who stand, or seem to stand, in their way. Jesus is he who, having the power to kill, chose to suffer and die on behalf of evildoers.

Pacifist Reveals God

When a man appears who is appointed, as all men are, to die, and chooses the manner of his death, a man who could destroy and who chooses rather to be destroyed, then God is revealed. Mastery over life and death is effectively asserted, divine power is released, and a new creation becomes possible. If, as happened with Jesus, such a man actually dies, his mastery and victory are so much the greater because he has proved that there was no flaw in his love, that he did not shrink from paying the ultimate price.

At first men never believe that. They cannot "see" it, for it seems absurd. The cross is foolishness. Jesus' disciples were like that, and "they all left him and fled." This was the end; he was dead. They had thought him wise, strong, the very source of life. Now they saw that he had been foolish and weak. He could not save himself.

Then the experience which we call the resurrection happened to them and the focus was completely changed. Surface facts were as they had been. He was "crucified, dead, buried." But the reality was very different. They knew now that he who had seemed foolish had after all been infinitely wise. He who had seemed weak would reign among men throughout all time. He who had seemed dead was alive, and they alive in him. Whenever a man follows in Jesus' footsteps—even of you and me this is true—he walks the earth without fear, and where he is, life is renewed.

Nations also are destined to die. Of each in turn can it be sung:

> Far-called, our navies melt away;
> On dune and headland sinks the fire.

Each struggles frantically to stave off death. Long before Dr. Mebane, Jesus pointed out that like madmen they destroy themselves in the effort to escape destruction. And for a nation, a society, there is no other way to overcome fear and attain unto life than the way in which the individual achieves these goals. The nation also must choose the manner of its death—for principle. It must choose to live and die for mankind rather than seek life for itself.

This is not a counsel of passivity, indifference or cheap success. It is a summons to sanity and moral heroism. The nation that says: "I will appease in order to save myself," still wants to save itself, still thinks that a nation will arise that will be immortal and that it is that nation. That nation will perish as all nations do. Appeasement and renunciation are not identical, but opposites. God does not indeed always exact the full price, but he always exacts the unconditional willingness to pay it.

When a nation appears that is no longer concerned to save itself but to save mankind, a nation that no longer seeks immortality as a nation but chooses the manner and the moment of its death, it will have overcome the world. It will walk the earth without fear. It will experience the resurrection. It will create mankind.

GETTING RID OF DIRT SPOTS

A Sermon for Children by Lewis H. Davis

HAVE you children ever helped your mothers clean the windows? If you haven't, you ought to ask for the chance. It's great fun to see the windows all clean and shining and know you've had a part in it.

First, you put the cleaner on the window. Then, with your mother on one side of the window with her rag and you on the other side with your rag, you both begin to rub off the cleaner, and with it, the dirt. After you have rubbed so long it seems you surely must have touched every spot on your side of the pane, you stop to see if you have missed any spots. But almost always there are some places where you have missed—sometimes in the corners where your rag didn't quite reach, and sometimes right in the middle where you were sure you rubbed. Almost always you miss some spots on the first round. And your mother has probably missed a spot or two also.

So, the next move is to find out on whose side of the pane the dirty places are. "There's a place on your side!" you shout to your mother through the window pane. "Rub right here!" And you point to the place she can't see but you can. She rubs right where you say but nothing happens—the dirt is still there. "No," she shouts back to you, "it's on your side! You rub there yourself!" "It can't be on my side," you shout, "I rubbed all over the pane!" "Try it anyway," she says. Although you know it's not on your side you rub, and the dirty spot vanishes. So it goes, back and forth, until the dirty spots are all rubbed off. Some spots she can see, but you can't. Some spots she can't see, but you can. Between you, you get the window clean and shining.

It's almost impossible to tell on which side of a pane the dirt is. What looks like the other fellow's is often your own. What seems to be yours may be his. And you can't tell by just looking. You can only tell where it is by rubbing. It doesn't do any good to argue about it through the window pane. You have to get busy and rub. And when you both do that, the pane gets clean and the light comes through.

Sometimes the window panes between us and our neighbors get dirtied up with misunderstanding and hard feelings—just as the window panes in your house get dirty from the dust of the street, the rain from the roof, the fingers of little children. And those windows need cleaning, just like the windows in our homes, so that the light can come through and we can see clearly once more.

Getting right with your neighbors is like washing windows. Both you on the inside and the other fellow on the outside have to do some cleaning, for almost always there is dirt on both sides, and if only one rubs the window won't get clean.

And just as in washing real windows, its terribly hard to tell on which side the dirt is. Almost always it looks as if most of the dirt were on the other fellow's side. Have you ever heard two children talk like this: "It's all your fault!" "No, it isn't my fault at all! You are to blame! You did it first!" Each thinks the dirt is on the other fellow's side. But, you see, if we keep arguing about it, the window stays dirty and the light stays out.

It takes rubbing, not arguing, to make windows clean and shining—both kinds of windows. It's a good idea to assume that the dirt is on your side, even when you're sure it's on the other side. Then you get busy and rub. Time and time again it's your side that needs attention. That is why Jesus once said, "Why do you try to take the splinter out of the other fellow's eye when there is a whole beam in your own eye?" First, rub, and make sure your own side is clean.

We are here to worship God this morning. Every worship service should include a little window-washing. Worshiping God is a little like looking at a window from different directions to find the dirt spots that are hard for us to see but perfectly plain to God and the other fellow. When we are willing to rub on our side, God always helps on the other side, so his light may shine into our hearts once more.

LEWIS H. DAVIS is minister of Prospect Methodist, Bristol, Conn.

Pulpit Post

Reprints Wanted

SIR: Apropos of the article on congregational ethics by Gerald Kennedy, it doesn't do much good to have it read just by us preachers. Could you have some reprints made so that we could get it into the hands of our parishioners? I am in the market for some.

Church of the Brethren, Brownsville, Md. NEWTON L. POLING.

SIR: I was quite stirred by Robert J. McCracken's "Is This a Christian Country?" in January's Pulpit. Is there any possibility of issuing a reprint of the one-page sermon?

Price Hill Baptist, Cincinnati, Ohio. RITCHARD E. LYON.

[A number of requests for reprints of these articles have been received. If a sufficient demand develops, we will be happy to reprint. Let us know your needs.—THE EDITORS.]

Pulpit Gets Used

SIR: I thoroughly enjoyed the January Pulpit. I readily said Amen to Dean Pope's remarks about seminary training. I was challenged by Dr. McCracken's thoughts. And I used the children's sermon ("Treasures in the Town Dump," by Lewis H. Davis) with my children. Instead of treasures from the dump, I changed it to treasures from the trash can and took a trash can to the chapel packed with trash and treasures. The children got the point without any explanation.

Christ and St. Michael's, Germantown, Pa. W. HAMILTON AULENBACH.

Dont' Stop at Diagnosis

SIR: Those who can clearly see the secularistic tendencies of our time, as Dr. McCracken does (January 1951), and who can also see how the church herself, through her insufficiently tutored pastors, *velle-nolle* lends a helping hand to these tendencies to replace Christianity, can appreciate Dean Liston Pope's critical analysis of our preacher training. We cannot, however, stop at the diagnosis. His constructive suggestions are only formal ones: free choice of subjects, individual attention to students, international aims and universal tendencies. But how about the "life in the seminaries"—the professors' attitude (exemplifying Christianity or not) and the content of subjects to be taught?

The first problem of a seminary—and of a dean—is the faculty rather than the student body. There you begin raising or lowering the standard. The most important qualification for a seminary professor is that he should be a Christian, honestly and truly Christian in mind, heart and actions. His task is not a simple one: to teach the laws of the behavior of inanimate objects or abstract theories of existence; he has to teach "life," earthly as well as heavenly life. Thus, he teaches not only with the words of his mouth but with his whole existence. He cannot remain immune toward his subject, for teaching life requires self-commitment.

The selection of students should not be solely on the basis of scholastic standards, nor should it be according to the five classical (Cicero's) requirements of an orator. The Apostle Paul did not measure up to these requirements. Love of the cause, fire and zeal are just as important as a clear mind.

The whole curriculum and life in the seminaries ought to be determined by the aims and problems of the *pastor loci*. His task is to build that spiritual building which is made of souls instead of stones, the body of Christ, the church. These souls first have to be formed or transformed to fit into this building. This is the "art" that the student has to learn, and the best way to learn it is in the process of building. This building ought to be done in the seminary as in a shop where the masters work together with the students, using the students themseleves as formative material for the church in the seminary. Being transformed, the students will understand what it means to transform others: thus they will easily acquire the art itself.

In other words, the life in the seminary should be the church exemplar, an ideal that the pastor will carry in his heart and mind while working in his pastorate.

Woodbridge, N. J. L. KECSKEMETHY.

'Humbug'

SIR: The paragraph by Virgil Kraft (p. 15, January issue) seems absolutely hideous to me. The word "humbug" came spontaneously to my lips. In the same issue asking God to bless our murder planes ("Hymn for the Airforce," by Garland Evans Hopkins, p. 20) seems to me sacrilege. Your country has half its population on the membership rolls of the churches. Yet see what ghastly things you are doing in Korea! Ask America to invite the new war to America—it would do you all a great deal of good.

Birmingham, England. E. A. COLLINS.

Filing Systems

SIR: . . . Why not run a survey of the most workable systems for filing sermon illustrations? You might help some of us who are still looking for an efficient system to find out just what satisfactory systems have already been devised by our fellow ministers.

Vermillion, S. D. ROBERT MIDGLEY.

(The Pulpit will be happy to receive letters of not more than 250 words from any of our readers who would like to share their filing secrets with Mr. Midgley and a great many others who need just such help.—THE EDITORS.)

Correction, Please!

SIR: It was a pleasure to see my "Snow Prayer" included in the February Pulpit, but the rural imagery was somewhat robbed of its punch by the transfer of the location of its origin from rural Maine to Lowell, Mass. I hope you will print this correction to reassure your Lowell subscribers that no snow-worshiping cult is operating in their city.

Here in western Maine we have Kezar lake with its backdrop of the eastern slope of the white mountains. The inspiration for the "Snow Prayer" came in January when the ground was still bare, an event which only the older residents remembered as having happened 50 years before. Then in the night, in the third week of January, we were quietly blanketed with snow.

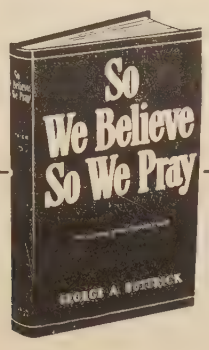
Church of Christ, Center Lovell, Me. DOUGLAS HARDWOOD.

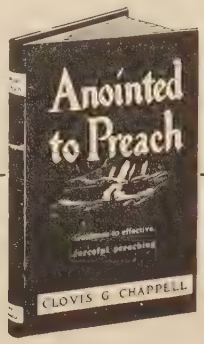
Church Calendar

SIR: Referring to the discussion of the calendar of the church year in the January issue, it seems to me that the action of the commission in arranging this calendar has created an unnecessary division where it might have been made a great force for unity. They have created observances for traditional days in the liturgical churches, but given them different names and dates.

It is very evident that a number of the "modern observances" mentioned by Mr. Edwards are not modern at all. "Universal Bible Sunday" is simply the traditional observance of the second Sunday in Advent. If the commission wanted to change the name why not use the same day? And "Rural Life Sunday" is merely a revival under a different name and date of the Rogation Sunday of the liturgical churches. Other similar instances can be cited. And "Sundays after Pentecost" is the Roman Catholic designation. The commission is overly optimistic if it

READABLE and USABLE





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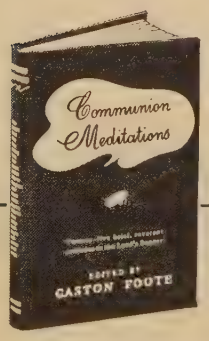

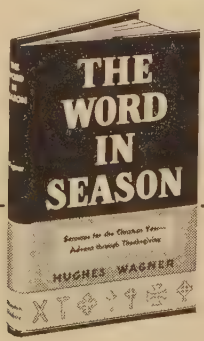

At Your Bookstore . . .

Abingdon-Cokesbury

expects the Anglican and Lutheran churches to cut their ties with the past and the rest of Christendom by adopting this new calendar.

What is actually happening is that Protestantism, which booted the ancient observances out the door three centuries ago, has discovered its loss and is trying to recover it, albeit often with little knowledge or understanding of what is available. But we of the Anglican and Lutheran heritage appreciate our possession, we do not find Septuagesima deadwood nor the long Trinitytide a barren area. Rather we find these seasons full of spiritual riches, not to be supplanted by some modern innovation. One of the glories of the ancient system is that it is a framework into which can be fitted whatever is needed to meet the present conditions. It is the product of 19 centuries of the church's life and man's need. It is not necessary to destroy the framework to repair a few loose boards.

Protestant Episcopal Church, JOSEPH D. C. WILSON,
Baldwin County, Ala. Archdeacon.

Preaching Today

SIR: First of all, I would like to say that a Christian minister must never consider himself primarily as a preacher. He is an ambassador of the Almighty God in this mundane order of existence, and every thought, word and action of such a person must have the imprint of the heavenly government which he represents. Woe unto a church whose minister has forgotten the greatness of his call, the uniqueness of his cause and the urgency of his mission amidst the chaos and the confusion of his environment.

The depth of his conviction is the one single factor, which, more than the depth of his knowledge, makes him capable of appealing to the audience. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?" While the Roman Catholics and the Fundamentalists often have a misplaced sense of authority and conviction, liberal Protestants have no ultimate conviction at all on certain important matters. The success of our preaching, teaching and converting mission can hardly be achieved until and unless we are thoroughly convinced of the fact that in Christ God has spoken once for all and that he is all the world to us. If we are not convinced, we cannot convince others.

If the American audience is indifferent to the gospel, let us close all our churches for an indefinite period of time and go to the countries where the gospel has never been preached, undertaking happily the glorious privilege of suffering for him who spared not his only begotten Son for us. There are still hungry souls around the world. We must preach Christ and him crucified and preach to the ends of the earth. He is still the total answer to man's total need.

Union Theological Seminary, M. V. GEORGE.
New York.

SIR: The preacher must fully understand what society believes and why. He must feel within himself the excitement of science, the call of security, the drive of economics and the unreality of much we term religion.

Milton Methodist, MYRON M. HALL.
Milton, Ore.

Inconsistent?

SIR: The best sermon in the January issue was "Memories" by Herman J. Kregel. But the military brass he displays is not consistent with the fine Christian sermon he preaches.

Methodist Church, CARL ALLINGER.
Holland, Ind.

Inadequate Interpretation

SIR: Your interpretation of the "Great Debate" and its conflicting views doesn't seem adequate to me. Perhaps you are trying to fit the debate into your own pattern of thinking.

JOHN SHADE FRANKLIN.
Military Chaplains Association,
Brooklyn, N. Y.

By Roger J. Turrell

Do idealism and sympathy for the unfortunate make ministers easy marks for the Communists?

Are Ministers Communistic?

MANY laymen are worried about us ministers. They fear we have been seduced by radical and "subversive" elements. This is not news to us. In the present hysterical fear of communism we feel the pressure against our academic freedom almost constantly. I believe the *Christian Century's* "Simeon Stylites" coined the couplet.

Breathes there a minister with soul so dead,
Whose congregation never called him red?

Typical Remark

Here is a typically apprehensive remark from a well intentioned layman. Writing in the National Association of Manufacturers' magazine *Trends* for September 1950, Robert Wilson contends: "Church leaders are naturally idealistic, and sympathetic with the unfortunate. They are understandably attracted to any system that promises a better break for the common man . . . hence they tend to be easily misled by the 'ready promisers' and the plausible proponents of such panaceas as socialism or the gentler forms (if any such there are) of communism." This businessman is more than decent in his proposed remedy. He states that the answer is not to grow antagonistic toward church leaders, but for business leaders to give more time and money to the church. Then, he says, ministers will understand businessmen better and will be better informed on economics. Preachers need more contact with "practical men of affairs."

Mr. Wilson speaks the mind of thousands of laymen in the country, many of whom are faithful members of our congregations. It is a very old bogey, but it is growing progressively worse. They fear the clergy is swinging toward communism.

Preachers Understand Communism

Let's get the record straight and clear at the outset. Surely preachers understand as well as any other group of people that Russia is the last place on earth where any independent-minded person would want to live. Russia does not allow freedom of ideas and expression. It is a military dictatorship, ruled by a tight unscrupulous little clique, which is supported by a single political party numbering less than two per cent of the people. This ruling clique dictates not only what all the populace shall do but even what they shall think, insofar as such dictation is possible. Every book, every paper and magazine, every sermon, every broadcast must be censored and made to conform to the iron rule. Even works of art and musical productions must conform to the rigid ideas of the dictators.

Again, the government of Russia is officially atheistic. To be sure, after trying for twenty-five years to stamp out the Christian faith, Stalin gave it up. He adopted an old political maxim: "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em," and now follows a policy approaching tolerance. But this policy is purely a matter of expediency. It does not imply approval. And preachers in Russia must still make their utterances conform to government demands or quit preaching.

Anything that can be said against the slavish subservience demanded of everyone in Russia can be said of the Communists wherever you find them.

No Inroads Made

For these reasons and many more it is utterly ridiculous to think that the Communist organization has made any inroads or gained any number of converts among the Protestant clergy of this country. Statistics reveal that there are some 190,000 Protestant clergymen in America. If it were possible to go over their personal records with an x-ray-like penetration, put them on trial one by one in such a grilling, say, as was given to Alger Hiss, the investigators would come up with next to nothing. The number of convinced Communists would be negligible, probably less among ministers than among any other group of similar numbers.

Someone may say, "But this does not answer the question entirely. Couldn't it be that many ministers are 'fellow-travelers' without realizing it? Couldn't it be that many of them are grasping at ideas or even joining organizations which give help to the Communists, and so these clergymen are being used without their knowledge?"

Again the answer is No for the overwhelming majority of clergymen. They are not more gullible than other people, especially on questions of politics and economics. There is such a variety of educational backgrounds among preachers that it is very hard to generalize about them. As for those with limited education, at least they know this, that communism is atheistic. That's all they need to know to make them shun it like leprosy. As for the educated group, it is only fair to say that they are not fools, at least not for any political pressure groups. Some of the courageous ones may be "fools for Christ's sake," as Paul worded it, but they are not fools for Joe Stalin's sake. Actually, any group of ministers I have known average up rather conservatively on political questions.

Why So Much 'Smoke'?

"If this be true," one may ask again, "if they are a relatively conservative group, why then have they been attacked so much? If there is no fire of communism in them, why is there so much smoke?"

One probable reason is this: The "smoke" may be the deliberate work of the real Communists to smear the clergy by a whispering campaign. We have all seen this underhanded type of action in political campaigns. The unscrupulous will start a scurrilous story about an opponent. They'll say: "His past is not good; he's had some immoral chapters." Or, "His blood is not pure." It could be that the real Communists are now using this very tactic in their attempt to divide and demoralize the American public. We fall for it when we pass on unfounded rumors. That means that persons who have passed on such bits of gossip and say of any minister, "I hear he is a Red," are the real helpers of the Communists. It is they who have been duped and used, and not the preachers. It may be that Mr. Wilson, for instance, was doing exactly what the Communists want in his *Trends'* article.

Probably the best thing to be done whenever we hear irresponsible and thoughtless remarks about any clergyman, or anyone else for that matter, is to say at once: "I don't believe it, and

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ROGER J. TURRELL is minister of First Methodist, Kenton, Ohio. He was educated at Ohio Wesleyan University and at the Boston School of Theology. For two years he was instructor in philosophy at Ohio University. His pastorates have included Dayton, Cincinnati, Portsmouth and Urbana, all in Ohio.

I won't believe it unless you show me a Communist party card with his signature. And I won't believe it then until I know the card is not a forgery." Let's assume there are actually 100,000 registered Communists in this country. The FBI says 80,000, but some estimates run higher, so let's call it 100,000. Since our population is 150 million, that means that one person in 1,500 is actually a Communist. So when you say, "I don't believe it," you have 1,499 chances in 1,500 of being right and only one in 1,500 of being wrong. And if it is a minister who has been accused, the chance of your being wrong becomes infinitesimal.

As for any further explanation of these attacks, remember that clergymen are not the only ones who have had to undergo them. Editors, writers, teachers, lawyers, politicians, even our movie-makers and entertainers have been similarly smeared.

True 'Americanism'

Most misunderstandings about ministers' points of view are basically misunderstandings of true "Americanism." Even though a preacher may be utterly against the Communists, he still may not feel that everything about our American commonwealth is beyond criticism. On the contrary, if he is a Christian, he cannot feel that America is exactly right all the time. Remember, preachers are out to transform the kingdoms of this world into the Kingdom of God. The judgment of God is always on the sins of society and upon the iniquities of any people and country. The Bible and Christian history are full of examples of men of God who protested oppression or sin in the society of their day. Moses denounced the Pharaohs and led his people to freedom. Amos, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jesus and countless others condemned irresponsible abuse of wealth and oppression of the poor. The preacher of the gospel is not on his job unless such utterances find a place in his message whenever he sees a clear issue. When he voices this eternal message of God's judgment upon the world, he is merely speaking the Christian truth as he sees it. That he should be free to do this was one of the reasons why America was founded. That he continues to be free to speak the truth as he sees it is the surest evidence that communism has made no inroads into our American way.

Freedom to Protest

No, Mr. Wilson, preachers are neither Communists nor fellow travelers. But it will be a sad day for you and your way of life if American preachers ever lose their interest in "a better break for the common man." Give your time and money to the church not to try to influence preachers to protest less but to make secure a free pulpit from which they can continue to protest until freedom has been achieved in every area of American life.

Sermon Summaries

Developing Discipleship

THE parable of the talents is told often but all too seldom are its implications for modern life felt by the hearer. This parable of Jesus has rich meaning for our lives today as we consider Christian stewardship. To the person seeking to develop Christian discipleship, its challenge is threefold.

Discover your talents. Jesus was implying that each of his disciples has talents of use to the building of the Kingdom of God. Take a look at your life for a moment. What do you have that can be used of God? Well, your time can be well used with a recognition of the fairness of God's demand for a portion of that time. The church can use your consecrated talents in numerous ways—church school teachers, choir members, board and committee membership, organizational activity, and many others. The judgment of God is based solely on how we use what we have.

Recognize the divine element in your talents. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Stir up the gift of God that is within you." He was saying to this young man, "Recognize and develop the divine in human life." Great scientists and musicians have recognized this partnership with God. The weakness of the unfaithful servant in the parable was his failure to see the divine in his one talent.

Develop your talents with Christian consecration. Jesus judged persons only by what they could become, not by what they were. The Christian life is a process of growth and development. Christian stewardship calls us to develop our abilities and talents in the spirit of Christ. A buried talent is never a buried treasure. Talents become treasures only through Christian use.—*Hoover Rupert, First Methodist, Jackson, Mich.*

The Value of Green Pastures

And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass.—Gen. 1:11.

IN the never finally unrequited hope that spring will come the church appoints a Rural Life Sunday. In the older churches this was called Rogation Sunday; that is, a Sunday set aside by special appointment. And it usually fell on the fifth Sunday after Easter, when it might be supposed that temperate climes would be enjoying the regreened earth. But that happens to fall this year on another "rogated" date, Mother's Day. So we are given the liberty to observe Rural Life Day on any Sunday in May or even on this April 30th.

There is plenty of scriptural background from which to proceed on this spiritual quest. It was by a prescientific but sound insight that the epic poet of the first chapter of Genesis put the creation of grass before all other living things. All life is dependent upon it. In our cosmos, "grass is the creation of God, and grass is the nurture of Man." Green chlorophyl alone is able to change the energy of the sun into the living substance on which plant and animal life are alike dependent. Destroy the grasses and erode the humus into the sea, and you leave the surface of the earth a deathful desert. We exist on an oasis in the universe, where green grass and green trees sustain and shelter life.

Set it down, then, as a general thesis that God made green grass and all the resources of nature for us to use, richly enjoy, and pass on in undiminished glory.

In the first place, we will enjoy the gifts of nature more thoroughly if we do so understandingly. There is a deal of literature in the field. Warmly to be commended to those who want understanding and appreciation of the predicament of man upon his planet is William Vogt's *The Road to Survival.* Ornithologist and consulting ecologist to more than one American government, the author sounds the tocsin of death through erosion. If we do not conserve the land which God has given us, we shall, like the Gadarene swine, slip into a sea of death. This is no jest in the dust-bowls of the world, and is not irrelevant to that corn-hog-land economy which is not entirely detached from the human hogs of greed.

Erosion control is difficult to achieve, whether of soil or soul, when there are many voices to be heard. Along the highway you see a sign, "Soil Conservation District." Near by is a creek-bottom pasture so short you could play golf on it. Because a bend in the stream was undercutting the bank, a new creek bed has been ditched as straight as it could be surveyed, to assist to run off. But up on the hill the crops have been put into strip planting and the land has been contour-plowed, in proper curls to retard the runoff.

In the second place, we can enjoy the beauties of nature more deeply if we do so reminiscently. Thoreau was right when he said, "In wildness is the salvation of the world." There is a wisdom in the wilderness that is often deeper than civilization.

One element in recreation in the mountains or by the lakes is atavistic. Now I didn't know what "atavistic" certainly means either, until I looked it up. And there I found that *avus* means "grandfather." An atavistic pleasure is one in which you skip a generation or several generations and go back beyond your recollected experiences, and live in the bones of your grandfathers.

My ministry has been fortunately blessed with other atavistic throw-

(Continued on page 27)

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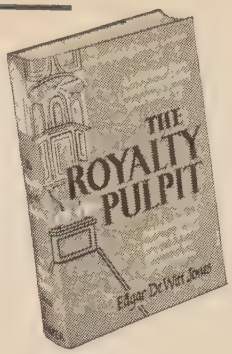

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with a foreword by Halford E. Luccock

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Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

'Please, Mr. Preacher, No Corn Today'

A FEW days ago, in the "agony column" of our local paper—that section in which readers find sweet release in letters to the editor—no little fervid, if somewhat ungrammatical, indignation was expressed at the fate of some horses which had reached the age of retirement from municipal service and, it had been reported, were to be sold to peddlers. "No, no," agonized the correspondents; "if they have outlived their usefulness, let them be put out to pasture with plenty of clover and oats."

Being a reasonably tenderhearted man and a lover of animals, I was inclined to agree. But I found myself wishing that that happy future might also be the fate of some equally hard-worked words and phrases, grown weary with age, which are trotted (or shambled) out every Sunday morning to give a tony touch to the homily. I am not thinking at the moment of those occasional gray shades of a past day which still flit about in the language of Zion, such as "alas," "fain," "forsooth," "yea verily," "divers," and "whoremongers," nor even of the disconcerting "shall's" and "might's" which so many preachers seem to feel are more ecclesiastically proper than the "will's" and "may's" that a less spiritual syntax would seem to demand. These are, I am sure, if not an abomination unto the Lord, at least a quite unnecessary source of annoyance to many of his saints.

But there are others far, far worse. There are those phrases which appear overnight and are as infectious (or is it contagious?) as the flu. Against them preachers seemingly have no immunity. I am thinking especially of that accursed phrase, "ivory tower." Every theological student, every theological professor—I know that my wearied and outraged eardrums are not unique—can attest the fact that the informal but realistic grade given to each visiting preacher is judiciously and sensibly heightened if that particular phrase has not leaped out at us. Twenty-five years ago it was "over the top." Preachers who, of course, had never smelled any powder smoke and wouldn't have known a hand grenade from a Charlie Noble found sweet solace and increased confidence in this jaunty and wholly unrealistic play-acting, as they addressed their sheltered brethren and told them what they would encounter when they left their cloistered security to go "over the top" in the "no man's land" which said parsons modestly (but clearly) intimated was their habitual place of abode. But never did I hear a man who as a chaplain or combatant had actually gone over the top make use of the phrase. Rarely do those who have been in Gethsemane talk about "bearing their cross."

Then only yesterday it was that rich and learned-sounding phrase which suggested that the preacher had really had a classical education. How hard it was to finish any sermon without at least one conspicuously inconspicuous reference to *sub specie aeternitatis*. It always reminded me of the word of a former student and friend of mine, a colored minister, who had assured me that in certain churches where he was accustomed to preach it was dollars in his pocket to be able to "give it 'em in the original Greek and Hebrew." During the past six months, though my nerves have continued to frazzle and my temper to mount at the jaunty and impudent intimation of seclusion in the solitary tower which elephants and walruses had lived and died to make possible, I have not been forced to view this cloistered calm *sub specie aeternitatis*. But only yesterday, in a book which crossed my desk for review, I found its grinning face.

At the moment we are less classical, more agrarian, in our allusions. Now we are jauntily referring to "getting down to the grass roots." It used to be "to brass tacks," but now no longer. I am afraid that this particular epidemic is to be traced to the missions field. I could hope that it is not to be laid at the door of the missionaries themselves. It would be sad to think that they would treat us so. No, it must be the secretaries. That is far, far easier to believe. But whatever its source or place of origin, it is definitely with us. In sermons, in prayer meeting (yes, sometimes cloistered souls descend from their ivory towers long enough to go over the top into that no-man's-land experience of a Wednesday evening) in business meetings, sooner or later, if you have patience, you can be sure that the roots of grass will appear. Personally I am not especially interested in grass—perhaps that is because of having had to cut so much of it—but if I must have it served up, I much prefer its tender, green leaves to its roots.

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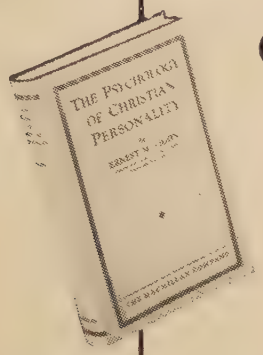

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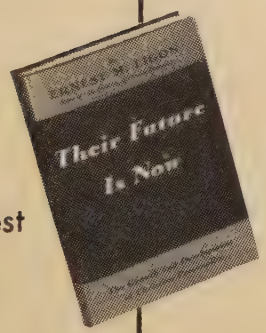

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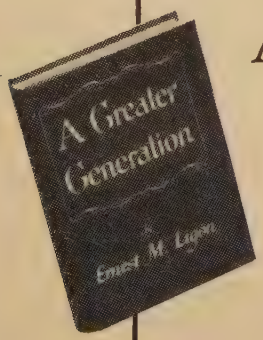

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Pulpit Paragraphs

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

• *Confessing Our Failures*

ONE of the most moving books I read before the war was Pierre Van Paassen's *Days of Our Years.* One of the most moving descriptions in that great book was the story of the hunchback, Ugolin, of the little French village of Bourg. Ugolin was perhaps one of the ugliest and most repulsive-looking caricatures of a human being, but beneath the ugliness of his exterior there was a sensitivity one would hardly have expected to find and which none of his contemporaries seemed to realize existed. This came out as he talked with Van Paassen while carrying the latter's bags to the hotel.

On the way home that night a crowd of roisterers, both men and women, not a few of whom had been drinking too much, caught up with Ugolin. They tripped him, kicked him, cursed him, beat and bruised him, and finally in their savagery tied him to a lamppost and tore the clothes off his body, piece by piece. They would have killed him right there had not the parish priest come along and dispelled the crowd. He cut Ugolin free, put the bruised body on his own back, and carried him home. The next day Ugolin died. When word reached his sister, who had been compelled by the callousness and bestiality of the very community of which she was a part to become a prostitute, she took a gun and shot herself.

On the day of the funeral when practically all the townsfolk were in the church to pay their belated respects to the victim of their own hardness and hatreds, the priest climbed into the pulpit in front of the two caskets. He stared down at his congregation. He knew them all. They were his flock. They had come repeatedly for confession and communion. They claimed to be members of the body of Christ. At long last the old priest began: "Christians! When the Lord of life and death shall ask me on the Day of Judgment, 'Pastor de la Roudaire, where are thy sheep?' I will not answer him. And when the Lord shall ask me the second time, I will not answer him. But when the Lord shall ask me the third time, 'Pastor de la Roudaire, where are thy sheep?' I will hang my head in shame and I will answer, 'They were not sheep, Lord; they were wolves!' "

All right, so we in our community don't go around beating up cripples and supporting houses of ill fame! But as we honestly search our own hearts and shame-smeared souls and recount the times we have denied our Lord, destroyed the hope and happiness and the expectations of others, and failed in even the simplest test given by Christ our Lord when he said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye show love one to another"—let us pray not only for forgiveness, but also for the strength to stand up for the faith that deep down in our hearts we must confess we've so often failed.—*Herman J. Kregel, Post Chaplain, United States Military Academy, West Point, N. Y.*

Pulpit Calendar

Apr. 1—First Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 8—Second Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 15—Third Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 21-28—Passover (Jewish).
Apr. 22—Fourth Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 29—Rural Life Sunday.
May 3—Ascension Day.
May 6—Sunday after Ascension.
May 6-13—National Family Week.
May 13—Whitsunday (Pentecost); Festival of the Christian Home; Mothers Day.
May 20—Trinity Sunday; Christian Unity Sunday.
May 27—Second Sunday after Pentecost.
May 30—Memorial Day.
June 3—Third Sunday after Pentecost.
June 8—Sovereign's Birthday (United Kingdom, Canada, Australia).
June 10—Fourth Sunday after Pentecost; Children's Sunday; Shavoth (Jewish); Students' Sunday (Methodist).
June 14—Flag Day (U.S.A.).
June 17—Fifth Sunday after Pentecost; Father's Day.
June 24—Sixth Sunday after Pentecost; Nature Sunday.

SEASONS: Lent, Eastertide, Whitsuntide.

ATLAR COLORS: Lent, violet; Maundy Thursday, white; Good Friday, black; Easter Eve, bare or black; Easter and Eastertide, white; Whitsunday and Trinity, white; Whitsuntide, green.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of nationwide or denominational significance.)

• *'We Shall Never Forget Him'*

DURING the past war, one of our G.I.'s stationed in England found himself with much time on his hands. A soldier with too much leisure time away from home generally gets into trouble. G.I.'s drunk and morally loose never sold democracy anyplace in the world. This G.I., a lad named Chuck Santerone, on leave one day was walking down a country road when he ran into some English boys who were being chased off a farmer's property. To cover their embarrassment they said, "Any gum, chum?" When he had given them the gum he inquired what the trouble was. "The farmer didn't want us on his grounds," was their explanation. They looked amazed when Santerone asked them if they hadn't some place to play. They hadn't. Santerone then went into action. He rented a strip of land with the idea of building a playing field and clubhouse for English boys. He asked the English fathers to help him. Thinking this was more Yankee big talk, they glibly assured him they'd help, even though playgrounds did seem such a waste of good ground. One day not long after that some trucks pulled into town loaded with lumber, forty G.I.'s on leave, shovels and tools. Helped by the English fathers, the American soldiers really went to work so that within ten days a clubhouse with library, carpenter shop, game room and auditorium, and a playing field outside, were finished. Santerone wanted it named after the Lighthouse Boys' Club, to which he had belonged as a boy in Philadelphia. The happy English boys insisted on its being called "Chuck's Club."

When he returned to America, Santerone was too modest to tell what he had done. Then one day a letter came from an English father addressed to the Lighthouse Boys' Club, telling what Chuck had done. The Britisher ended his letter with: "God bless America, for an American soldier left a bit of America right here in the heart of England. We shall never forget him."—*W. Hamilton Aulenbach, Christ and St. Michael's, Philadelphia, Pa.*

• *Communism Is a Symbol of Despair*

STALIN and his minions are a world symbol of harassment and dejection. Were the people of the world not dejected and harassed Stalin and his communist ideology would have no appeal, no influence, no support. The kingdom of Stalin is not the cause of world unrest. It is the symptom of it, just as a high fever is the symptom of a disease germ. People are feverish even in lands where the influence of Stalin is at a minimum. Hence there is no peace in their house and people want peace. They want peace even at the expense of peace.—*Ensworth Reisner, First Methodist, Milwaukee, Wis.*

• *Disobedience Brings Disaster*

OBEDIENCE is not the easiest virtue to exercise, and it is an all too rare quality of discipline in our lives. Nonetheless it is a vital quality for success. How vital it is we often do not realize until a moment of crisis confronts us.

Recently I stepped into one of your giant planes bound from New York to Washington. The day was calm and

the sky seemed unclouded, but after we had been a few minutes in the air snowflakes began to fall, and after two hours had gone by we became aware that it was impossible to land in Washington. The pilot was in constant communication with the control towers at the airport, and was *obedient* to every direction. Mark that, for it is important in my story.

The weather grew worse and worse, and the plane flew northward, back to Philadelphia, back to New York. At each city it was impossible to land, but at each airport the pilot was *obedient* to directions. Finally, at seven o'clock in the evening—we had set out at noon—we were able to land in Boston, with but one hour's fuel supply left in the tanks. What would have been the result if the pilot had not been obedient to the directions he received from the central towers? Disaster.

Disaster does not always overtake men suddenly, but I have seen this illustrated again and again. If a man's life has been marked by disobedience to the cardinal principles of life, if he has seen the heavenly vision and not responded—the end has been disaster, not triumph.—*Norman O. K. Makin, Australian Ambassador to the U. S.*

• *Niemöller Learned What Is Important*

WHEN Niemöller spoke recently in an American church, two newspapermen, knowing of his experience under the Hitler regime and expecting a sensational discussion of this experience, hastened to the church. After hearing an earnest gospel message, they went away disappointed, and as they went down the church steps one remarked to the other in disgust, "Six years in a nazi prison camp and all he has to talk about is Jesus Christ!" The trouble was that they had not learned what is of supreme importance. Niemöller had, and he had to talk about it.—*Milton Jay Peden, Duncan, Miss.*

• *Tinder for The Torch*

DURING the days of the depression, multitudes of people lived on a mere subsistence level, many of them lacking the barest necessities. One-third of the American population was ill fed, ill clothed, ill housed.

Someone is sure to say that that was to be expected in a depression. But what about times of prosperity? Most of us would agree that 1929 was a prosperous year. And yet in that year, according to a report of the Brookings Institution, approximately 12 million families received incomes of less than $1,500, or a total of about $10 billion. At the other extreme, 36,000 families, having annual incomes in excess of $75,000, possessed a total of near $10 billion. "Thus it appears that one-tenth of 1 per cent of the families at the top received practically as much as 42 per cent of the families at the bottom of that scale."

"In that gross inequality," says Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, "and the resentment that comes from it, is the tinder inside the democracies that the Communists put their torch to; that is the breach in the democratic wall that the Trojan Horse goes through; that is the road the fifth column marches on. We have been freed from many coercions, but we have not used our freedom to build a community of people living together in liberty, fraternity and approximate equality of opportunity and condition. Mark this! We never can make the Declaration of Independence and *The Grapes of Wrath* lie permanently down in peace together."—*Harold W. Ruopp, Hennepin Avenue Methodist, Minneapolis, Minn.*

• *Biblical Illiterates*

RECENTLY a Gallup poll was taken of American adults asking them to name four Gospels. The results showed that only 35 per cent could name all four, another 12 per cent could name part of them, while 53 per cent could not name a single one of the four.—*Thomas B. Musser, St. Paul's Evangelical and Reformed, West Milton, Pa.*

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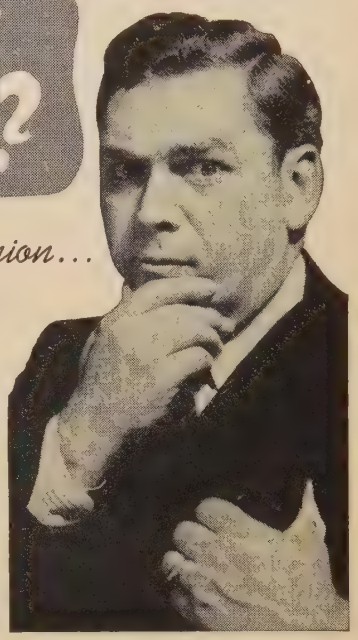

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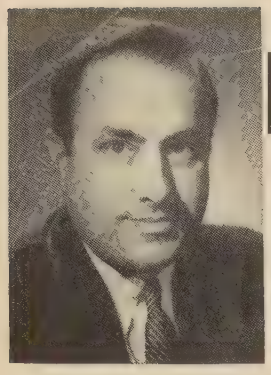

Ministry of Music

By Ernest K. Emurian

Quarterly Review of Sacred Music

THE fact that a sermon is preached is no guarantee of its excellence. The printing of a book does not insure its worth. The publication of music, sacred, classic, semiclassic or popular, does not mean that the music in itself is actually worth publishing. Some of the world's best music has never been published; some of its worst has gone through printing after printing. In between, on Oxenham's "misty flats," the rest "float to and fro," seeking singers, interpreters and occasional royalties. Consequently it is refreshing to discover a music company that publishes *ex cathedra*. The Bama Co. (Chicago) writes: "Like most publishers, we do not publish a composition until it is definitely proven to be a successful piece of music. Once a composition has been proven, it is published, and there is nothing anyone can say about it except to accept it as it is. Reviewers do more harm to music than good." Having been told off so convincingly, this column rejoices that it belongs to the "ex-perience" school of music. It is never safe to trust what the composer or publisher may say about the merit of a musical composition. In the final analysis, it will live or be forgotten on the basis of the message it conveys and the emotions it stirs in the human heart.

FOR the few who are moved by the complicated intricacies of a medieval German fugue (sacred or secular), there are many who are emotionally touched by a good interpretation of a familiar tune. The average congregation of everyday people likes music with an emotional appeal. The "Ave Maria's" of both Schubert and Bach-Gounod are universally loved. The words generally sung to these melodies have limited their use among Protestant communions. Fortunately, the Edward Schuberth Co. (New York) has now prepared settings of both for use in Evangelical churches. With words by **Anne Kylin**, entitled JESU IMMANUEL, they are well worth 50 cents each. If the ultraconservatives object, let them object. The music is far too lovely to be lost to Protestant worship. After all, "Faith of Our Fathers" was a Catholic hymn about Mary's prayers before it was Protestantized by eliminating references to the Virgin Mother.

Fred Waring's publishers (Shawnee Press, East Stroudsburg, Pa.) recently brought out some interesting hymn arrangements. The Waring Choir Series includes ROCK OF AGES, FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, O WORSHIP THE KING, WHEN I SURVEY, MY FAITH LOOKS UP TO THEE, COME THOU ALMIGHTY KING, and many other universal favorites, Arranged by **Roy Ringwald**, their chief virtue is that each line of every hymn is arranged for four-part mixed, four-part male and three-part women's voices. At choir rehearsal it is a simple matter to run through each line. On Sunday morning, the director can select the arrangement to be used according to the voices available. This is a boon to choirs whose lone tenor may develop hives on Saturday night or whose leading bass may sneak away to a family reunion in the country over the week end without having advised the director at the previous rehearsal. Also, with more men being called into military service, emphasis will be placed on two- and three-part arrangements for women's voices. Each publication includes two of these hymn arrangements. The price, we would guess, is about 20 cents each. (Unfortunately, the price is not printed on the music.)

WHILE transcriptions (adaptations of instrumental music for choral or congregational use) are frequently ridiculed and scorned as beneath their dignity by the musical "upper crust," average folks like them. Congregations being made up of average people, a new Whitney Blake Co. (New York) release will find favor. It is a choral arrangement of the famous opening theme from the second movement of Tschaikowsky's *Fifth Symphony*. Popularized some years ago as "Moonlove," this melody has been used repeatedly as a sacred solo, usually with the words of the 23rd Psalm. It is prepared for four-part mixed, four-part male, and three-part women's voices by **R. Vene**, under the title FATHER ALMIGHTY (15 cents). Critics (with some sane exceptions) will tear out their hair, but congregations will respond. Choir directors will do well to remember that it is not the critics who make up congregations.

The Neil A. Kjos Co. (Chicago) has a series of not too difficult, not too long anthems for the average choir. Coming in series called "Choral Repertoire (Standard), Selected Octavo, Christiansen and Tkach," they should

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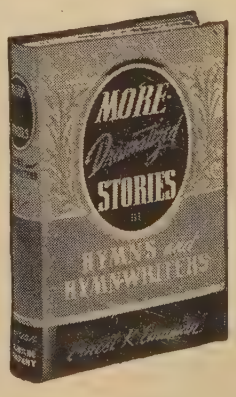

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become increasingly popular. LET GOD IN, REJOICE AND GIVE THANKS, and LIFT UP YOUR HEADS are fair examples. Price, 20 cents each.

OF the writing of peppy, jazzy gospel songs and choruses there seems to be no end. Five new collections arrived last week. Included were two from Brumley (Powell, Mo.): UNIVERSAL SONGS AND HYMNS and BOOK OF RADIO FAVORITES (50 cents each). Not everything in such volumes is worthy of the gospel. While such compositions may be sung, they can never be reckoned as typical American church music. We are producing far better, most of it aimed neither at the hundred-voice paid chorus of an endowed metropolitan cathedral nor at the shouters of the shanties across the way. Rather, it is written for great congregations that, tending to neither extreme, are yet soul-hungry for music with which, through which and in which to worship God.

Sermon Summaries

(Continued from page 20)

backs to the pioneers. I first preached in Saskatchewan, to three schoolhouse congregations on a 30-mile pony-and-cart circuit. The sandy loam of those short-grass plains had, much of it, been sown to wheat. But there was still unbroken prairie there. Buffalo trails were distinctly visible. What thunderous herds had drawn the Indian there, and succumbed to powder and rifle bore? Cabeza de Vaca reported how, when lying prone in the short grass for a shot, he could see the setting sun beneath the bellies of such buffalo. They are virtually extinct in the world now, though a few are prisoners from the sweeping plains, and behind bars in the zoos look sorrowfully at visitors who come to contemplate their misery.

On a third level, then, we may more profoundly enjoy nature if we comprehend it historically, reverently and mystically.

Consider the Odyssey of the Atom. Here is the chain reaction on which our life depends. The atom is locked in a rock. But water, percolating for ten thousand years, dissolves it out into a crack. And the rootlet of a burr oak noses down and drinks it up. Lifting it with its limbs it drops it in an acorn to the ground. There the acorn decays into the leaf mold, and feeds a pasque flower, which a fawn comes nibbling on, and grows into a deer. But the swift arrow of the Indian finds its mark, and the atom in the deer enters into the Indian, becomes his bone, his sinew, his eye, his hope, his fear, his courage. And so in defecation or death the atom again enters the cycle of the earth and shoves the daisies up.

In time another race comes by, and daisy atoms make a cornfield. Geese land in the fall on the margin of the lake near by, make their forage on plundered corn, and flying high convey the atom south to other continents. There the atom is dropped on the seashore, and plover picking pebbles and provender next spring bring it back again to the shore of perhaps the selfsame lake. Again it drops into molds, to enrich the land for a clover crop, which feeds a dairy herd, whose milk a child drinks. Become a man, the child enters the halls of an infant university, wanders from its knoll, with its atoms in him, to the mountains of California, in some fastness of which he dies.

Mold and worm may do their work, and the atom now travels down the ladder of erosion in torrent and stream to the ancient sea to be deposited in the mud, in a hundred million years to become rock again and, elevated by pressures, meet the exploring rivulet that dissolves it out for another oak rootlet to seize upon.

This is the Odyssey of the Atom. Here is no death, but only cycle in perpetuity.

But on a fourth and highest level, we should handle the land ethically, if we are physically or spiritually to survive. There is an ethic of the land. Wherever the land is touched by human, there values obtain which are full of right and wrong.

This obtains on the farm level. There conservation, in spite of our great destruction, has taught us to create much, too—so much now we do not know what to do with it. We have great surpluses in our stockpiling plan. Enough wheat, it is said, to make 12 loaves of bread for every man, woman and child in the world. Enough corn to make all the corn products that the U. S. can use in the next five years. Butter to bake a birthday cake for every child under 15 in the U. S. for the next ten years. Enough cotton to produce 54 house dresses for every woman in the country. To which might be added 76 million pounds of dried eggs, which it is costing $158,000 a year to keep refrigerated in a cave. (See *Life*, March 20, 1950, pp. 116 ff.) All of which sounds very silly, did it not also sound very cruel and selfish.

For on the other side of the world it is possible that one-tenth of the population, some 40 million people, will die of starvation this year. This may seem a mere statistic. But it is full of human misery in China. An overpopulated country, though carefully conserving its nitrates, has largely denuded the landscape of its trees. The rainfall runoff is terrific. Moreover, there is so little wood for fuel that what there is must be used for cooking. There is little for heat, and not enough to warm water properly to bathe children. The result is the scabies and babies are too often related by more than rhyme. They are cute youngsters when they are fat and chubby. But let the gaunt and sunken eyes of famine fix their gaze upon you, and you feel the leer of death.

There is a profund ethical aspect in the whole conservational use of the land, whether applied to the vacationist who overshoots or overfishes the bag limit or is careless with his fires, or to the farmer who overfarms his land without replenishing the soil, or permits it to erode dwon the gullies to the grave of nations in the sea. The ethical aspect of the land is that it touches humankind, and is therefore fraught with moral values. The land is not a commodity but a community.

If there were any word to add to this, it would be to say that what grass is to the body—mediator of the energy of the sun—the Word of God is to the soul—mediator of the Divine Life. But even the Word of God is dependent for its conveyance upon the world of plants. The first pages were made in old Egypt of papyrus leaves; and the paper of our books today is made of northern pine.

When the truths of God, conveyed to us by great books, have written themselves on our minds and hearts, the conscious cycle is complete. "The grass may wither and the flower may fade, but the word of our God abideth forever" (Isa. 40:8).—*Alfred W. Swan, First Congregational, Madison, Wis.*

Goodness Is Greatness

ONE great threat to democracy from within is the decay of character. Wise thinkers have always insisted that good democracy and good men belong together; that without character there can be, in the long run, no democracy; that democracy minus character spells demagoguery, despotism and decay.

More than a century ago, Alexis de Tocqueville, the famous French historian, paid a visit to America. He was eager to find an answer to the question: In what does the greatness of America consist? Later he was to write these eloquent words:

> I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers and it was not there. I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her fertile fields and boundless forests and it was not there. I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her rich mines and her vast world commerce and it was not there. I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her public school system and her institutions of learning and it was not there. I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her democratic congress and her matchless Constitution and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.

Quite so! If America ever ceases to be good America will cease to be great. The moral fiber of the nation is all-important. Whatever destroys that, destroys essential democracy. It is for that reason that many of us are greatly concerned about the rapid increase of crime and gambling, juvenile delinquency and drunkenness and divorce; for these spell a decay in moral character without which democracy cannot flourish.—*Harold W. Ruopp, Hennepin Avenue Methodist, Minneapolis, Minn.*

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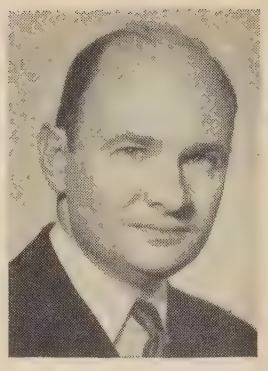

Come Let Us Worship

By Clarence Seidenspinner

The A B C of Worship

UNDOUBTEDLY, on your Sundays off you go visiting at other churches in the hope that some pastor may lead you to the secret places of the Most High. Every minister needs this kind of experience because the regular leadership of his own service tends to exhaust him.

Your experience is like that of all pastors who go visiting. Sometimes you have seen the Lord, high and lifted up, his train filling the temple. And then sometimes you have seen not the Lord, high and lifted up, but a poorly prepared preacher, or a pitifully self-conscious leader of worship, or an ill behaved choir, or an organist who rolls her eyes. You leave such a service greatly disappointed that you wasted a Sunday and failed to get the lift from divine worship that you badly needed.

The difference between those two types of experience constitutes the A B C of worship. The pastor needs to realize that in the ordering and celebration of divine worship he is at work on one of the most complex of the composite arts. He does not have the comparatively simple task of merely preparing a sermon, or painting a picture, or interpreting a musical score, or performing some other act that would relate him creatively to one of the fine arts. His task is to be at home in all the arts of prose and poetry, of music and preaching, of architecture and ceremonial, that make up the rich complex of worship. To know the A B C of worship is to know the problems involved in this composite art of divine worship. There are six such problems in every service.

1. The order of the liturgy is a basic problem. What kind of pattern shall the service follow? To be sure, some services appear to be made up of a miscellaneous collection of prayers, anthems, responsive readings and other elements of worship, pulled out of the hat in the same haphazard fashion in which the surrealist painter might pull out of his self-drugged memory an assortment of watches and fingers, violins and tree trunks, seashells and skulls. Of course, the service fails in its most elemental aspect if it breaks down at the point of its skeletal structure. There must be psychological understanding, logical insight and aesthetic acumen in the ordering of divine worship.

2. The second problem of the pastor in preparing a service is that of the materials of worship. The order of service must be clothed with the living garments of prayer, of sermon and music. Where shall the pastor find his prayer? What kind shall be used on a given Sunday morning? How shall the pastor write his prayer? What concepts shall he include and in what style shall he express them? What path shall his sermon take and how shall he prepare it? Are there litanies, invocations and other forms of prayer to be included? If so, where shall he find them or how shall he write them? Are there congregational readings to be used? What hymns shall be sung on a given Sunday morning? What is the relation of the anthems to the service? What music shall the organist play? All these are problems which confront the pastor as he asks the question regarding a given Sunday morning: With what materials shall I clothe my pattern of worship?

3. The architectural setting for the service constitutes the third problem for worship. Divine worship is not celebrated in a vacuum. Generally speaking, it is celebrated in a church building and the minister and choristers exercise their leadership from the chancel. The minister needs to ask certain questions regarding the architectural setting of his service. Has he done the best with the setting that is there? Does he use any physical means to express the progression of the liturgical year? Has he thoroughly investigated the question: How can the setting be used to the best advantage for divine worship?

4. Ceremonial constitutes the fourth problem of worship. The ceremonial is the action of the pastor, choir and people during the service. Many ministers pay no attention to ceremonial at all, and, as a result, interfere with the movement of the soul toward God.

5. Vestments constitute the fifth problem. What shall the pastor, the choir and other participants wear?

6. Finesse might be the name given to the sixth problem of worship. It has to do with the standing and seating of people, with the use of the organ or piano in tying the service together or facilitating its flow. It has to do with the action of the ushers and other people who participate in the service. To know that these six points are the fundamental problems of the liturgy is to know the A B C of worship.

Preachers in Print

Watchers of the Springs

THE last Sunday in this month is designated as Rural Life Sunday in the calendar of the Christian year. Since the largest part of the membership of most urban churches came originally from the country, this special observance should not be confined to churches in rural areas. When this year the accomplishments of the movement to strengthen country churches are totaled up, there will be real reason for rejoicing. But there is one aspect of rural church life that has been little affected by the new emphasis. The caliber of the sermons being preached in rural America remains poor. Yet there is no single more important means for waking up sleeping churches, rural or urban, than the preached Word. It is all well and good that rural ministers be trained to administer larger parishes, to participate in farm organizations, to know the ins and outs of contour farming and soil conservation. But beyond these the rural pastor should be an able preacher. In the end it means little to get people to come to church unless the church has a message for them. Failure to emphasize the essential place of preaching in rural churches has been the greatest weakness of the rural life movement in this country.

NOW comes the good news that a start has been made in that direction. The rural church department of the Virginia council of churches recently commissioned a committee headed by **C. Ralph Arthur** to prepare a volume of sermons and addresses by rural preachers. For four years the department had conducted a rural life sermon contest among the country pastors of Virginia. By using the prize-winning sermons and adding to them four outstanding addresses on rural church life, Mr. Arthur and his committee have produced a unique and valuable volume entitled ★★WATCHERS OF THE SPRINGS (Virginia Council of Churches, $1.00). The four addresses included are well worth the price of the book. **Edward K. Ziegler's** essay "The Church with the Wide Horizon" defines how the rural church may be the church in a striking and challenging fashion, and is especially helpful. But the book's real value is that it is unmistakable proof that good sermons are being preached in some rural churches, which means that there is no reason why good sermons cannot, in time, be preached in most rural churches. Outstanding among the sermons are those by **Murray L. Wagner**, a contributor to this issue of The Pulpit and three times winner of first prize in the annual Virginia contest. A sermon by **Alexander B. Berry, Jr.** also deserves special mention. Preaching from I Corinthians 3:9, "Ye are God's husbandry," he urges farmers to interest themselves in reclaiming the rural church with the same fervor with which they are reclaiming worn-out farms. Given preachers who can preach as these men do, farmers will heed their advice. For all rural preachers this is a three-star volume.

GARLAND EVANS HOPKINS.

ROUNDUP

THE WINNOWING YEARS. By **Victor E. Beck.** Augustana, $1.50. Reflected in this little book of poems, readable in an hour, is a spirit of high faith. The poetry itself swings from the lyrical to the lumbering and indicates that this is more the poetry of a thinker than a singer. The single poem, "Snapshots," is worth the price of the book. Occasionally there are fresh phrasings which brush up an old truth, like, "The little snarls upon the loom of time." Not all the poems in this volume are great poetry, but nearly every one holds a great idea.—*Virgil A. Kraft, Methodist Chaplain at the University of Chicago.*

★★SO WE BELIEVE, SO WE PRAY. By **George A. Buttrick.** Abingdon-Cokesbury, $2.75. The reader finds here the unusual depth of insight and vividness of style characteristic of all Dr. Buttrick's books. The chapters are inviting and deal interestingly first with the fundamental convictions of our faith, then with the relation of our faith to prayer. Exploring the Lord's Prayer, clause by clause, the writer shows it to be the supreme expression of our faith. In addition to stimulating his mind and stirring his heart, this book will give the preacher a number of fine homiletical illustrations.—*Joseph S. Johnston, Epworth Methodist, Norfolk, Va.*

THE LIBERATION OF LIFE. By **J. M. Dawson.** Broadman Press, Nashville, $1.25. The ideas with which this 90-page book deals briefly are important ideas with which the Baptist denomination has long been concerned. Quotations appear on many of the pages indicating wide reading on the part of the author. Yet the volume is not a carefully reasoned document. It is a series of assertions. It appears to follow the pattern of much of contemporary Protestant preaching and may furnish a clue, in its failure to base its assertions on careful logical analyses, to the inability of that preaching to appeal to the critical mind.—*W. B. Bryan, Dean of Macalester College, St. Paul, Minn.*

THE APOSTLE PAUL. By **Olaf Moe.** Translated from the Norwegian by **L. A. Vigness.** Augsburg, $4.75. Written originally by a seminary professor in 1923, this volume is chronological, encyclopedic commentary on the life and letters of the apostle. Contains wealth of reference material; Paul's theology only incidentally brought in (this is covered in another volume). Author's position that of conservative Evangelical. Bibliographies at chapter ends, but book poorly indexed. Reads like and would make good reference or textbook. Excellent typography and binding.—*Herman J. Kregel, Post Chaplain, U.S.M.A., West Point, N. Y.*

KNOWING THE SCRIPTURES. By **Arthur T. Pierson.** Zondervan, $3.95. This is described as "another Zondervan Reprint Classic" of an original edition published in 1910. Its 317 pages deal with rules for and methods of Bible study. It is difficult to understand why a book with so dry and mechanical an approach to this subject would be reprinted when such interesting and helpful books of more recent date are available. The Bible is an ageless book, but our methods of studying it have changed considerably since 1910!—*Alton M. Motter, Executive Director, Chicago Sunday Evening Club.*

(★★★★You can't afford to be without it; ★★★Unusually valuable to the preacher; ★★Above average in its field; ★A good buy; No star, depends on your taste and need.)

Books Preachers Are Reading

February	March	This Month	An analysis based on reports from leading religious book sellers and from the reading of The Pulpit's distinguished editorial associates and book reviewers.
		1	**Anointed to Preach.** *Clovis G. Chappell. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* **$1.50**
1	3	2	**Here I Stand.** *Roland H. Bainton. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* **$4.75**
2	1	3	**Life of Jesus.** *Edgar J. Goodspeed. Harper,* **$3.00**
	4	4	**So We Believe, So We Pray.** *George A. Buttrick. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* **$2.75**
		5	**The Gospel in Modern Thought.** *Alan Richardson. Oxford,* **$2.00**
		6	**The Christianity of Main Street.** *Theodore O. Wedel. Macmillan,* **$2.00**
9	2	7	**American Freedom and Catholic Power.** *Paul Blanshard. Beacon Press,* **$3.50**
7	5	8	**A Mighty Fortress.** *Ernest F. Tittle. Harper,* **$2.50**
3	6	9	**Mr. Jones Meet the Master.** *Peter Marshall. Revell,* **$2.50**
	10	10	**The Belief in Progress.** *John Baillie. Scribners,* **$2.75**

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

ANOTHER constitutional amendment has been ratified—the first since the repeal of prohibition in 1933. More than the necessary three-fourths of the states have approved the limitation of the presidency to two elective terms.

Two Term Limit On Presidents

This is a reform long sought by public opinion but delayed again and again by political interests of the party that happened to be in control of Congress. Until the late Mr. Roosevelt and his followers decided that his popularity could break the immemorial tradition (as he twice did), no President from Washington's time forward had been willing to defy the unwritten law. But now the law is in the Constitution. What effect this will have on the 1952 election is still uncertain. Mr. Truman is specifically exempted from the application of the amendment. Will he avail himself of this exemption and run again? If he does, he will be within the law, but will surely encounter a psychological hazard in defying the principle which public opinion has now overwhelmingly approved. It would seem that, as a candidate, Mr. Truman's record would be about as much as he could carry without adding to his impedimenta the public resentment which his bid for a third term would surely evoke. If he does not run, whom will his party select? Is General Eisenhower being built up as Democratic standard bearer for 1952? If the Democrats can hardly nominate Mr. Truman, how can the Republicans nominate Mr. Truman's star performer, General Eisenhower? At this distance it begins to look as though the next presidental election might be a contest between two really great men—Eisenhower and Taft.

The Book of the Month

THE APOSTOLIC PREACHING, *by C. H. Dodd. Harper, $1.50.*

FIRST published in the U.S.A. in 1936, and reprinted five times in Great Britain, this widely influential little volume has now been republished by the house of Harper in response, no doubt, to a still growing demand. I could hope that the demand for its inestimable interpretation of the original gospel would not cease until every minister and thoughtful Bible student had read it. I have just reread it after fourteen years. As I reflect upon the course that my thinking has taken during this period, it is clear to me that its influence has been very great. Professor Dodd is the pre-eminent New Testament scholar in Great Britain. The effect of his teaching is to turn the chronology of the New Testament "right end to." The fact that the four Gospels stand at the beginning of the New Testament has led many to assume that the apostolic preaching consisted primarily of the ethical teaching and heroic moral example of Jesus. This, however, is only half of the truth. The original gospel was primarily the good news that in Jesus the Kingdom of God had actually emerged in history, that his passion and resurrection were revelatory acts of God by which his Kingdom was ushered in. "We are not to think of the record in the Gospels as the ultimate raw material out of which the preaching was constructed. The preaching is primary," and the importance of the Gospel story derives from the faith embodied in the preaching.

A Thought for the Month

IN THE APPROACH to church union two types of mind appear. I shall call one the exacting mind, the other the trustful mind. Each renders a necessary service in arriving at an acceptable basis upon which the churches can unite. The exacting mind wants to see the complete picture of the united church before committing itself to union. It tends to think in the legalistic terms of structure, authority, power. It requires that the functions of the various parts of a proposed united church and of its various offices shall be meticulously defined in as complete detail as already exists in any one of the uniting denominations. The trustful mind feels that such fullness of elaboration is not necessary, nor possible, nor indeed desirable. It thinks in the more flexible terms of trust in the good faith and the good sense of the participating churches and in the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is content with a broad outline as to structure and is assured that the various parts and the functions of the various offices are so similar in the participating denominations (despite their dissimilar terminology) that they will quite normally fall into their proper relation and exercise. The fundamental difference between these two types of mentality is that one conceives of church union as a finished or static event, while the other thinks of it as an event which is but the beginning of a process of spiritual and ecclesiastical growth. The trustful mind is therefore willing at the outset to accept some slightly loose joints and even some inconsistencies in the faith that any such defects or inconsistencies will be resolved in the fellowship of a united church, whereas they can never be resolved, but are only magnified, in sectarian isolation. The problem of church union is to bring these two types of mind together.

Church Union—Two Types of Mind

Charles Clayton Morrison

For the Record—

THE deadline for sermon manuscripts to be mailed in the first annual selection of the seminarian preacher of the year is April 1. As this issue of The Pulpit goes to press every indication points to a heavy load for the board of judges. It can already be said that the purpose in mind when we sponsored this selection has been attained. In scores of theological seminaries throughout the country an increased interest in preaching has resulted from the friendly competition to select three student preachers to represent each school in the national finals of the selection.

Board of Judges

As soon as all the sermons are received the judges will get busy. The significance of the selection has made it possible to secure some of America's greatest and busiest preachers to help us in making this decision. Bishop Gerald Kennedy, Oscar F. Blackwelder, A. Milton Smith, Robert J. McCracken and a well known layman, Bradshaw Mintener will assist Alton M. Motter, director of the Chicago Sunday Evening Club, and the managing editor of The Pulpit in reading and evaluating the sermons submitted.

The interest which Dr. Motter and John Nuveen, president of the club, have taken in this project is evidence not only of their interest in student preachers but also of farsighted churchmanship. The reputation of the Chicago Sunday Evening Club has been built by the great preachers who have spoken to its large audiences over the past 44 years. Its mission has been to provide a platform from which men with messages could achieve a larger hearing. The crowds who attend the weekly services of the club attest the success of that mission in the past. But its continued ministry depends on the ability of the seminaries to produce great preachers with burning and prophetic messages. The need for great men with strong messages is just as great as ever.

Purpose of Project

It is to help in the development of that type of preacher that The Pulpit in cooperation with the club sponsored this project. Seminary students need to know that people still want and appreciate great preaching; that sermon-making is no periforal activity of the ministry. They should also be told over and over again that however successful organizers and administrators they may become, the real test of their ministry will be their ability to feed hungry souls.

It is to underscore the central place preaching occupies in any successful ministerial career that both The Pulpit and the Chicago Sunday Evening Club have joined in sponsoring the selection of the seminarian preacher of the year. Announcement of the judges' decision will appear in the July Pulpit. G. E. H.

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

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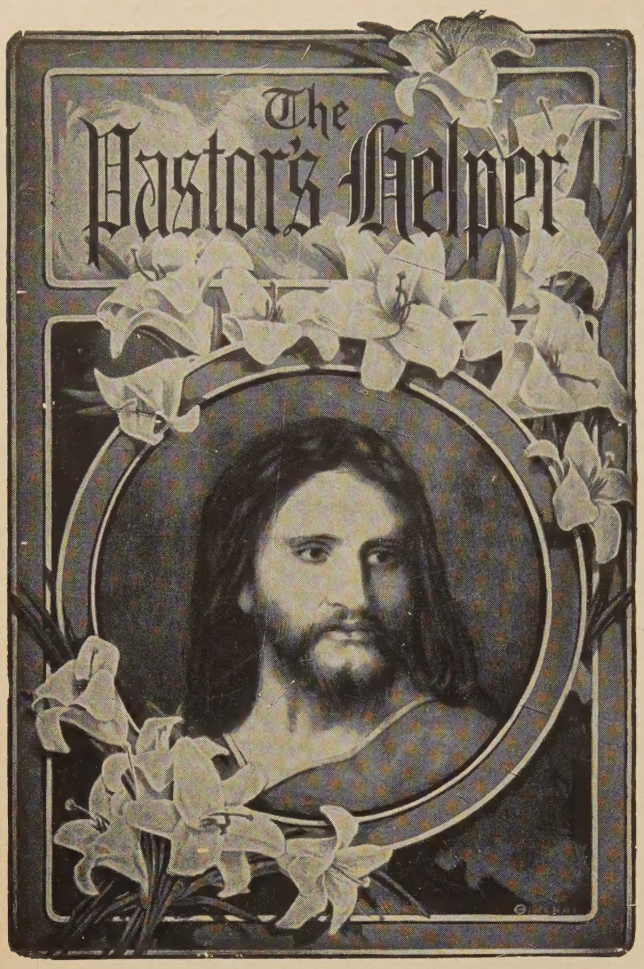

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